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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-019 *29 January 1996*

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Arab League Aide on U.S. Pro-Israel 'Bias'

MM2601123796 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 26 Jan 96 p 4

[Report on interview with Ambassador Muwaffaq al-'Allaf, assistant Arab League secretary general for political affairs and former Syrian chief delegate to the negotiations with Israel, by Ashraf al-Faqiyy in Cairo; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Ambassador Muwaffaq al-'Allaf, assistant Arab League secretary general for political affairs, has said that the U.S. and Israeli elections will not be a means to put pressure on Syria. He accused Israel of procrastination on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

Al-'Allaf, former chief delegate to the negotiations with Israel, said that the U.S. Administration is biased, because it "is supporting Israel to help it to obtain a price for implementing the resolutions of international legitimacy." In an interview with AL-HAYAH he criticized some Arab parties' departure from the coordination circle, saying that the Palestinians lost a great deal in the settlement they reached through the secret Oslo negotiations.

He stressed that Syria will not sign a peace agreement with Israel without Lebanon. He said that the talk of Iranian concern over the Syrian-Israeli negotiations "is exaggerated." "Iran has no right to oppose what Syria does, especially as it is aware that Syria is struggling for the sake of liberating its territory."

Asked about U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's optimism during his recent tour of the region, and whether it means that a Syrian-Israeli agreement is now imminent, al-'Allaf said: "There is more optimism than ever before, since Israel realized after Shim'on Peres became prime minister the need to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy and to adopt the land-for-peace principle. The upcoming elections in the United States and Israel could help to prompt Peres and President Bill Clinton to achieve something to bolster their positions, as they are both seeking to win the elections." Asked whether he is banking on Washington's role in bolstering the peace process despite U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry's announcement of new support for Israel during his visit to the region, al-'Allaf said: "There is a U.S. bias toward Israel. It can be viewed within the framework of the known Israeli logic of seeking to obtain a price for the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy — which would mean rewarding Israel for its violation of international law. I believe that the U.S. bias and the boast of special relations with Israel will not help to establish peace."

Asked about Israeli concerns over the size of the conventional weapons [arsenals] in the possession of some Arab states and whether he believes it is possible to reduce these arsenals in the region, al-'Allaf said: "The issue of conventional weapons in the region can be looked into after the region has been freed from weapons of mass-destruction, with the states in the region retaining a minimum limit of conventional weapons for self-defense."

Asked why Arab coordination stopped after the Palestinian-Israeli agreement, al-'Allaf said: "Coordination stopped because of the separate steps taken by some of the parties that participated in the Madrid conference. Syria was surprised by the secret talks and separate deals. To our surprise, the Palestinians were the first to be singled out by Israel, when it was they who needed the coordination and solidarity most, on the grounds that their track was the most difficult one. The Oslo agreement which resulted from the secret talks deprived the Palestinians of support and of the pressure the other tracks could have exerted on Israel to iron out any obstacles. Syria continues to support the Palestinians despite their rush [for peace with Israel], and it hopes that they will recover their legitimate rights in full. The Arab League will support Palestinian negotiators in the final negotiations, which will define the shape of the peace the Palestinians have obtained."

Asked about the claim that Syria is using its influence in Lebanon as a means to put pressure on the U.S. Administration and Israel to achieve a settlement, al-'Allaf said: "That is erroneous. Syria believes in a comprehensive peace on all the tracks. Bilateral talks have over the past three years been conducted independently on all the tracks. Syria has not negotiated on Lebanon's behalf, and Syria is against separate deals. It is untrue that Syria prevented the Lebanese from reaching an agreement with Israel.

"If Israel has succeeded in singling out the Arabs, one track after another, but has failed on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, it is because Syria is not willing to sign a separate peace with Israel without Lebanon. Syria's political line differs completely from the line followed by those who only won the Nobel peace prize, and nothing else. The linkage between the Syrian and Lebanese tracks does not means that they are moving side by side. However, this linkage means that neither party should sign an agreement with Israel without the other."

Asked to explain Syria's relationship with Hizballah, he said: "Hizballah is a Lebanese resistance movement, the

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cause of whose existence is the Israeli occupation. Syria supports any Arab resistance against the occupation. The only way to end Hizballah's activities is to end the occupation. The same applies to the Arab economic boycott of Israel, since this boycott is a weapon of self-defense. This boycott will end when the cause is eliminated. The League is surprised by the U.S. call for ending the boycott before Israel's full withdrawal."

Asked about reports that developments in the Syrian-Israeli talks are arousing Iran's concern, and whether he expects further coolness in Iranian-Syrian relations, al-'Allaf said: "The talk of Iranian concern is exaggerated. I do not believe that there are people opposed to a just and comprehensive peace. Iran has no right to oppose what Syria does, especially as it is aware that Syria is struggling for the sake of liberating its territory and that it will not accept that this be done under any Israeli terms. I believe that Iran supports this position and knows the reasons that prompted the Arab states to engage in the peace process. It also supports the idea of the Arabs recovering their rights."

Islamic Affairs

Islamic Jurisprudent: Muslims Must Boycott Israel

96LH0076A Doha AL-RAYAH in Arabic 2 Dec 95 p 10

[Report by Hasan 'Ali Dibba]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Yusuf Qardawi, an Islamic awakening jurisprudent, is still faithful to the Muslim people, who rally around him, seeking his Islamic religious rulings [fatwa] in difficult times. He shows the way to the Muslim masses who ask him for fatwas. Following a major debate about the fatwa on peace with Israel, which His Eminence Shaykh 'Abd-al-'Aziz Bin-Baz issued several months ago, His Eminence Dr. Qardawi received a question from his student Muhammad Salih al-Shib, associate professor at the Qatar University's College of Shari'ah, Law, and Islamic Studies, who currently teaches at the Jordanian University.

He wrote: Please issue a public fatwa, for our benefit and the benefit of the Muslims in Qatar, the Gulf, and everywhere else regarding the so-called religious tourism to Palestine or visits to the al-Aqsa Mosque and prayer in it while it is still under the occupation and sovereignty of the Jewish state and the Zionists. We are referring to non-Palestinians who have no family or property there and have no need to travel to that country. We exclude from our question people whose intention is jihad and martyrdom—if jihad and fighting are possible these days. You must take into consideration that the money spent on such tourism will strengthen the Israeli economy at the expense of the Muslims. Furthermore, the possible consequences of mixing with this kind of people and the purpose of such tourism are no secret to you.

Dr. Qardawi answered with the following fatwa regarding travel and visits to the al-Aqsa Mosque:

Thanks be to God and peace and blessings be upon God's messenger, his scion and his companions.

Islam demands that Muslims struggle and sacrifice to regain their usurped land. Islam does not want any Muslim to give up any inch of land usurped by an infidel and evil aggressor. This is well known in Islam. All the Muslim nation's ulema and sects fully agree on it. No two people disagree about this ruling.

This ruling applies to any part of the Arab and non-Arab Muslim world. It applies even more to the site of the Prophet's night journey and the al-Aqsa Mosque, which God blessed as the third holiest mosque. This confirms the need for jihad and fighting for the sake of God and for the oppressed men, women, and children.

If the Muslims cannot fight to defend their countries or regain the usurped parts, for one reason or another, their religion demands that they boycott their enemy economically, socially, and culturally, for several reasons:

1. This is the weapon they have at their disposal and this is the degree of jihad they can undertake. The Almighty God said: "Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies of God and your enemies," (al-Anfal:60). God only asks us to do what is possible. He does not ask us to do what we cannot do. If He sanctions a certain kind of jihad that we cannot undertake, he will not sanction what we can undertake. It is said in the Hadith that "If you were ordered to do something, do what you can."

2. Our dealing with the enemies—buying from them, selling to them, and traveling to their countries—will reinforce their position, strengthen their economy, and grant them the ability to continue their aggression against us, using the financial and moral profit they make from us. This is a kind of cooperation with them, which is absolutely prohibited, because our cooperation will be for evil and aggression. The Almighty said: "Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancor." (Al-Ma'idah: 2)

3. Dealing with usurping enemies by welcoming them in our countries and traveling to their countries breaks the psychological barrier between them and us and, with time, bridges the gap dug by the usurper and

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aggressor, which kept the ember of jihad burning among the Muslims. The Muslim nation should continue to be hostile to those who are hostile to it and support those who support it. It should not support its enemy and the enemy of God who attacks it. The Almighty said: "Ye who believe! take not my enemies and yours as friends," (al-Mumtahanah: 1). Normalization means making the relations between us and them normal, as if no usurpation or aggression had taken place. Our enemies are not satisfied with economic normalization. They want social and cultural normalization, which is more dangerous.

4. Mixing with these people without restriction or condition will seriously harm us and endanger our Arab and Islamic societies. It allows them to spread the evil, vice, and licentiousness with which they were raised and which they have mastered. It allows them to spread their deadly diseases, like AIDS and others. They are people who maliciously plan such things. They define their goals and plan to achieve them cleverly and maliciously while we are unaware of what is happening. Therefore, ending the reasons for this vice is a duty and necessity—a duty dictated by religion and a necessity demanded by reality.

In the light of these considerations, we think that travel and tourism to the Zionist enemy's state—for non-Palestinians—is prohibited by the shari'ah, even if the purpose is a so-called religious tourism or visiting the al-Aqsa Mosque. God does not demand that the Muslims visit this mosque while still under the occupation of the Jewish state and the protection of the Zionists. What He demands from the Muslims is to liberate and rescue this mosque from their hands and return it, with the area around it, to the Muslim fold. Excavations are continuously taking place around it and under it whose consequences we do not know. The Jews, however, are aware of them because they want to build their temple on its ruins. "And the nonbelievers plotted and planned, and God too planned; and the best of planners is God" (Al-Anfal: 30).

We all yearn to visit the al-Aqsa Mosque. A prayer in it is worth 500 prayers in ordinary mosques. However, we must keep the ember of yearning burning until we can pray in it, God willing, after it is liberated and returned to its natural owners—the Arab and Islamic nation. A Muslim who wishes to double the reward of praying in the al-Aqsa Mosque can visit the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. A prayer in it is worth 1,000 prayers in ordinary mosques; that is, the reward is double than the reward for prayer in the al-Aqsa Mosque. He can visit the Holy Mosque in Mecca, which is absolutely the best house of God. It was the first mosque established on earth to worship God. Prayer in it is worth 100,000 prayers in other mosques, except the Prophet's Mosque and the al-Aqsa Mosque.

This means that one prayer in the Holy Mosque in Mecca is worth 200 prayers in the al-Aqsa Mosque. Whoever yearns for the al-Aqsa Mosque today should quench his thirst by traveling to the Prophet's Mosque in Medina or the Holy Mosque in Mecca, until God enables the Islamic nation to regain its right and restore the trust to its owners. Then the faithful will rejoice in God's victory.

The claim that peace has replaced conflict between us and the Zionists is not valid. Jerusalem has not been returned to us. The leaders of the Zionist entity are still claiming that Jerusalem is their state's eternal capital. They continue to establish settlements around it and change its features. The al-Aqsa Mosque is still under their mercy or tyranny. The Palestinian refugees are still displaced. The alleged peace still uncertain, even if we accept the principle of peace with the usurpers. As we explained in previous fatwas, peace with the Zionists is rejected under the shari'ah.

This is what I say to the nation in these serious times. The enemies want our nation to be ignorant of its causes. They want to inject it with anesthetizing ideas that will make it lose its ability to act and distinguish between right and wrong. What is more serious than all this is for some people, who belong to the religion and do not have broad knowledge, to issue fatwas, allowing the Muslim people to place their hands willingly in the hands of their murderers and usurpers of their land. They prefer partial, temporary, and suspicious interests over the overall permanent, basic, and major interests. God is our strength.

Lord, show us what is right and give us the wisdom to pursue it, Lord, show us what is wrong and give us the wisdom to avoid it, amen.

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 19 Jan

NC2501115196

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 19 January edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

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2. Rulers Despotism Blamed on People's Silence
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4. Writer Says Executions Violation of Shari'ah
5. Columnist Says Gore's Remarks Interference in Internal Affairs

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6. Opposition Parties Determined To Dissolve Parliament
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WRITER OUTLINES NEW PARTY'S OBJECTIVES

An 800-word article on page 12 by Abu-al-'Ula Madi, "councilman of the founders of the Center Party," outlines the main characteristics of the party's founders and their major objectives.

He explains that the founders "were brought together by a sincere desire to serve their homeland, prompted by unlimited love, by an unshakable faith in the homeland's pioneering role in leading the Arab and Muslim nation, and a profound sorrow inside each and every one of them for what the homeland's state has been reduced to in many fields..."

He points out that "most of the founders exercised national public action" through student unions, trade unions, university staff clubs, and most social, scientific, and religious establishments in society. He adds that "some of them preached in mosques, churches, and charity organizations." He infers that the party is a "natural phase of evolution for them."

He adds that the founders believe the "essence of the current regional and international challenges is the political, economic, social, and cultural restructuring of the region" and that they agree on the need to work together to face these challenges.

Discussing naming the party "The Center Party," he says: "We feel that we come in the center in terms of our line, thought, and makeup". "This does not mean that the founders are against any nationalist faction wherever it might be; they feel that an important and considerable slice of the sons of this homeland is nonexistent and unrepresented in the political and party arena," he says, adding that "they will strive to use all democratic methods to persuade this slice, or part of it, to get involved in national action through the parties...," because the homeland "cannot afford to ignore the efforts of its sons who wish to work for its sake."

Madi underlines here that the founders "affirm...that they are not an extension of any other quarters or entity," and that they "stress action through the peaceful, democratic approach." He adds that they are "convinced of the need for involvement, pluralism, and dialogue" and that they desire to make "a sensible contribution to cure the worries of the homeland at this sensitive occasion."

According to Madi, the party is made up of "all the homeland's sections and categories, Muslims and Christians, professionals and workers, men and women." He says that the party's program stipulates that "the citizens, Muslims and Christians alike, enjoy the full rights of citizenship...in the framework of the full equality guaranteed by the Constitution and organized by laws."

Madi adds that the founders "will seek, as hard as they can, to restore respect to practically neglected canons by applying them and abiding by their provisions." Primary among these rules is "article two of the Constitutions, which states that Islam is the general term of reference for the state and that Islamic shari'ah is the primary source of legislation."

RULERS DESPOTISM BLAMED ON PEOPLE'S SILENCE

A 2,000-word article by Kamal Hafiz, p 12, urges the people to "demolish the Sphinx and reject Haman," pharaoh's minister and a symbol of arrogance and despotism.

Asking where the people acquired "all that ability to keep silent," he wonders if they learned it from the "school of tyrants" who sat heavily on the people's chests one after the other; "tyrants who no sooner had they occupied the seat of power than their features became sterner, their bodies bigger, and their nature fiercer...they soon saw themselves as flawless creatures who should not be opposed." He wonders if this state "is the making of a despotic ruler or of people who kept silent." He asks "why do we lag behind the procession of freedom that invaded all corners of the world, returning power to the people and making the rulers hired hands in their service?" He wonders why the people do not rebel against tyranny.

The writer says that "our pure religion" teaches that "the ruler is not a God," that "no human being is perfect," and that it is the people's duty to correct the ruler when he errs. He cites passages from classical books to show that it is the people's silence that made the ruler act as though the country and its resources are personal property "he inherited from his mother".

In a final word, he goes back to his questions, asking: "Where does the responsibility lie when the people keep silent? On the ruler when he submits to temptation, lives in luxury, and steals from his children, workers, aides, and brothers? Or on mankind, who see and live under injustice, live for their bellies and lust, and submit to an unfair law under which the ruler and his men live in glory, wealth, and high positions while the rest of

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mankind live in cemeteries, suffer to buy their day's bread, and let their bodies and minds be fettered?"

ISLAMIC THINKER URGES FRONT TO FACE ZIONISM

A 400-word report by Yusuf Sa'd, pages 1 and 8, gives an account of remarks made by Islamic thinker Dr. Mustafa Mahmud at a "gathering" in the Opera House on 17 January.

Attended by "all political and intellectual powers," the gathering was held to discuss "the life of Dr. Mustafa Mahmud" and his trip "from skepticism to certainty."

Dr. Mahmud called on all political and intellectual powers to "set up a true nationalist, unofficial front to undertake the task of checking the Zionist-American scheme and sensitizing the Egyptian people about Israel's schemes and its destructive infiltration methods that include spies, drugs, and ailments."

According to Dr. Mahmud, "we are trapped between Israeli deception and American oppression, after America declared itself the military guardian of the world and made Israel the spearhead, supplying it with destructive weapons.."

Dr. Mahmud believes that the only solution is "to set up a nationalist, unofficial front that embraces all categories of people..."

He stressed the need for "burying political and ideological differences" to avoid falling easy "prey" to sedition.

He said that Israel's war against the Arab and Muslim nation "will not use weapons, but dissolution, drugs, and spies." He believes that the only way to avoid that is "to stand like one and be vigilant to the schemes being hatched before us and our nation."

WRITER SAYS EXECUTIONS VIOLATION OF SHARI'AH

Majdi Ahmad Husayn's 2,000-word article, page 2, discusses the case of "returnees from Sudan," in which six Egyptians were sentenced to death. Stressing that "people's lives are not a toy and that it is not right to kill people according to political calculations," Husayn "republishes" a study he published two years ago to show that "military court rulings openly break the Koranic rules of punishment."

Explaining that the Islamic rule of punishment is "a life for a life," Husayn says that "the military court sentenced to death people who killed nobody." He adds that the convicted persons were "charged of massing weapons with the goal of using them... but they did not use them." He, therefore, calls on the "president of the republic to read this study before he ratifies the sentences."

Husayn believes that the execution of citizens without proving that they killed anybody does more harm than good to the authority itself, since this is "physical liquidation that took a legal form."

The writer believes that the major issue is that "Islamic shari'ah can only be understood and applied in a fully Islamic society that refers to it and reorganizes itself according to its rules." But this is not the case with us, he says.

Assuming, "for the sake of argument," that the Islamic groups are "renegades who disobeyed the fair ruler," he explains that their crime would be classified as "transgression, or political disobedience" as opposed to that of highway robbers and criminals who use force to steal people's money, rape women, kidnap children, promote drugs, or commit murder. Accordingly, they should not be killed, he says.

Husayn goes on to say that the "authority's approach with the Islamist youth who resorted to violence was wrong," since the "Koran-stipulate punishment" does not apply to this kind of crime. He, therefore, believes that the military court's sentences are being "turned into murder and indiscriminate political vengeance." He also believes that it was a mistake on the part of the authority to stop the dialogue they had started with the Islamic groups.

COLUMNIST SAYS GORE'S REMARKS INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS

A 500-word article by Tal'at Rumayh in the "Topic of the Hour" column, page 6, talks of "the Drama of Al Gore".

He writes that it is "understood" that the "story" of the Egyptian-American partnership is meant to prepare for "canceling U.S. aid." But he deduces that it ultimately seeks "to turn the Egyptian economy from an economy functioning in the orbit of western economies by remote control into an official satellite economy."

The writer disapproves of Al Gore's remarks about the need "to step up privatization and eliminate all the obstacles obstructing the Egyptian economy's march." He says that these are "internal matters" and that Gore "gave us a deadline, more like an ultimatum," telling us how to benefit from our experts. He views this as a "bold interference in our internal affairs" that "requires a pause."

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OPPOSITION PARTIES DETERMINED TO DISSOLVE PARLIAMENT

A 2,000-word report by Subhi Buhayri, page 2, gives an account of a congress of opposition parties held in Abu Kabir on 14 January, which was attended, among others, by Ibrahim Shukri of the Labor Party, Muhammad Saqr of the Muslim Brotherhood, and Tal'at Raslan of the New Wafd Party.

Speaking to the congress, Ibrahim Shukri talked about the "rigging crime the National Democratic Party committed in the parliamentary elections," and emphasized that "all the parties are serious in confronting this conspiracy that ignored the nation's will and brought an illegitimate People's Assembly."

He added that his party "took part in the national dialogue to obtain real guarantees for the electoral process," and because it believes that "the absence of democracy is the cause of all economic, political, and social ailments." But the dialogue produced nothing tangible, he said.

Shukri affirmed that "what happens in Egypt reflects on the entire Arab and Islamic nation and that the absence of the masses' role on the domestic level leads to the absence of an Egyptian role on the Arab level." He adds that this, in turn, leads to Israel and America benefiting from the resulting discord.

Speaking for the Muslim Brothers at the same gathering, Shaykh Muhammad Saqr stressed that "the perpetrators of crime will not escape God's punishment".

Addressing those "who use their authority and weapons as a shield," he says "your castles will not do you any good...the masses of this nation have the strongest weapons."

Tal'at Raslan declared "Wafd Party's solidarity with other parties and political powers to dismantle this People's Assembly."

"If the National Democratic Party is accepted by 93 percent of the Egyptian people, why are billions being spent on central security and special forces," he asks.

Mahmud Yasir Ramadan, deputy of the Liberal Party, blames Mubarak for the "defeat" the Egyptians suffered on 29 November. He demands a "referendum to dissolve the People's Assembly, which poses a threat to Egypt and its security."

Isma'il Mahmud, head of the Wafd Party branch in al-Sharqiyah, urges "civil disobedience" and the abrogation of all laws and legislations which the present People's Assembly passes.

PARTNERSHIP WITH U.S. AIMS TO CONSOLIDATE SUBORDINATION

A 3,000-word report by Hasan al-Qamhawi, page 3, examines the "feasibility" of the meetings of the Egyptian-American Presidential Council, what America hopes to achieve from them, the role of the Egyptian private sector, the impacts they will have on national industry, and the chances of having equal opportunities to compete.

He states that America used that "partnership" as an instrument of pressure against the Egyptian government. He notes that 13 of the 15 members of the Presidential Council are "either members in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, studied at U.S. universities, or live permanently in America" and that many of them have U.S. nationality and common interests with American companies.

Instead of developing a national economic project, these "formerly Egyptian, currently American businessmen" gave the reins to America, revealing their country's weaknesses under "a weak leadership...which is incapable of competition." Judging by the recent government reshuffle, it is clear that these people will be the decisionmakers and that the government will be nothing more than an executive body that receives instructions from the White House, al-Qamhawi says.

Noting that America "promises prosperity and increased growth rates," he says that "an observer of the progress of the American economy will find that the Egyptian-American partnership is just a link in a chain through which America seeks to overcome the deadly depression the American economy is suffering from and to open new investment opportunities in the Middle East and, thus, get a bigger chunk of the cake amid feverish competition between it and major economic powers like Europe and Japan." He adds that American diplomats and ambassadors "promote" American products to "bring the U.S. economy out its bottleneck." Its interest in Egypt is attributed to the "abundance of raw materials...the central location...and the 60-million strong consuming market that can absorb American commodities," al-Qamhawi says.

In al-Qamhawi's view, the term "partnership means cooperation and dealings between two equal parties. A lacking element in relations between Egypt and America." He cites figures from the balance of trade in both countries to show that the balance of exports is in America's favor. He asks here how a "debtor economy" can compete with "its creditor."

Moving on to "the risks of partnership with inequality," he maintains that Egypt "will turn into a big market of consumers for U.S. commodities" and that this

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will eventually destroy the existing and "newborn" Egyptian industries that cannot afford the competition. "Eventually, the national economy will perish and Egypt will not be able to break loose from the train of subordination," he says.

He also notes that statements by U.S. officials indicate that the United States is focusing on opening the door to its investments without observing the "equal treatment principle," at a time when Egypt needs modern technology more than investments. According to him, the U.S. economy will profit from the abundance of cheap labor and raw materials in Egypt making some $400 million annually.

In contrast, he explains that the American side turned down proposals to "establish a free trade zone between Egypt and America" and to expand the scope of the U.S. aid to include export-oriented projects since this would "encourage foreign products at the expense of U.S. commodities."

Moreover, he notes that the U.S.-Egyptian talks discussed restrictions obstructing investments in Egypt, failing to discuss practical steps to eliminate the obstacles obstructing Egyptian exports to America. He adds that the U.S. changed its aid goals when it allocated funds to the private sector instead of the public.

Judging by the statements the U.S. embassy issues on the Egyptian-American talks, he says that America "focuses on specific fields that guarantee its survival...and its domination of the market."

Al-Qamhawi adds that the final communique of the Egyptian-U.S. Presidential Council shows that America "sought to issue a number of laws that affect the essence of the Egyptian economy and threaten its independence." These include, among others, the law amendment that allows foreign banks to own over 51 percent of joint bank shares. According to al-Qamhawi, this will allow foreign banks to "manipulate the rate of exchange, use deposits to finance foreign investors, and establish projects that do not serve the national economy." He notes also that "adopting the BOT system will allow the private sector and foreign investors to implement infrastructure projects, increasing their prices and turning them into investment projects that seek more profits. A thing which will ultimately harm the low-income groups."

The writer finds it odd that the government is "responding quickly" to the U.S. demands, noting that the "presidential decrees" that eliminated the ceiling of investments and made other amendments to investment laws were issued only one day after Gore's visit. He believes that this conduct implies that "the government wants to prove its subordination".

Al-Qamhawi concludes that "it is clear that the Egyptian economy is being run by the White House."

WRITER WARNS OF NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF PARTNERSHIP

'Adil Husayn's 5,000-word article, page 5, is divided into two sections: The first responds to criticism addressed to the writer by AL-AHRAM Chief Editor Ibrahim Nafi' and the second discusses the Egyptian-American partnership agreement.

In the second section, Husayn views the developments pertaining to the Egyptian-U.S. partnership agreement. He begins by renewing his statement that the agreement and its ramifications "almost eliminate the Egyptian state's role in exercising its sovereignty on the national economy."

Citing Al Gore's remarks that linked the agreement to "building a new, prosperous Middle East," he asks about what was done in Egypt to achieve this prosperity since the agreement was signed. He notes here that Egypt "built no free-trade zone on American land," that "our exports to America did not grow," that the "Egyptian economy did not benefit from the advanced U.S. technology," and that "U.S. companies have not been attracted to invest in Egypt."

Using the justification Gore used to explain the failure of U.S. investors to invest in Egypt, "the ignorance of foreign investors of the reality and capabilities of the Egyptian economy," Husayn says that this means that "giant multinational companies were not certain of the prospects of sustained high profits if they invested in Egypt." He believes, however, that this justification is "obviously wrong" because "investors definitely know that investment in Egypt is profitable and safe". He believes that investors' refrainment from investing in Egypt is due to strategic factors.

Noting that American investments in Egypt were used to make "ice cream, hamburgers, pizza, Mcdonald's, Coca Cola, and Pepsi Cola", he asks whether this is the "type of technology heralded by the partnership agreement."

Husayn cites Al Gore's promise that the situation in Egypt will improve "in the context of stepped up measures to establish Middle Easternism". He notes, however, that "stability in Egyptian-Israeli economic relations will make the U.S. Administration urge its partners to come to Egypt to build small and medium-size projects" only "to feed the more advanced basic projects in Israel." He believes that this is why Gore demanded "rapid government decisions" to make a

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"rudimental change" in the Egyptian economic structure, giving the government a "deadline" that expires in November. Husayn wonders here if Gore can do the same thing in Israel or talk to the Israeli officials in the same tone.

'Adil Husayn notes that a series of decrees followed Gore's departure, including one giving foreign capital the freedom to come to any place in Egypt and invest "without any restrictions imposed by the state's sovereignty and higher interests."

Husayn states that his "objection" to that decision is not attributed to a "sensitive affliction," but to the fact that "Egypt is not a group of individuals inhabiting a piece of land or a land without an owner or leadership, where any foreigner can do whatever he wants just because he is an investor." He emphasizes that projects should serve the state's higher interests and not the investors' and that the state must impose "discipline" when it comes to foreign capital.

Husayn stresses that all nationalist powers must be prepared for the confrontation, because "the challenges are great."

Addressing the rulers, he says: "If you think that your forged parliament will pass all the laws and decisions you make, don't ever think that the matter can be settled by such laws. You excluded us from the People's Assembly to prevent us from opposing you in it. But our voice will continue to be high and daring outside the Assembly."

He warns the rulers against being deceived by the people's "apparent calm" because "fire burns under the ashes." He adds that the people will gradually realize what is being "hatched" for them and that if the present situation continues without any serious reform attempt, the "explosion will be formidable."

U.S. COURT SENTENCES AGAINST CLERIC, OTHERS REPORTED

An unattributed 500-word report gives an account of the hearing in which blind cleric Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman was sentenced to life in prison. The cleric's reaction to the sentence is cited.

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 23 Jan

NC2801191796

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 23 January edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

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7. Israeli Plans To Control Southern Red Sea Viewed
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ISRAEL, U.S. SEEK NEW MIDEAST MILITARY PACT

The main story in this edition alleges that there are U.S.- Israeli moves to establish a new military pact in the region, similar to the Baghdad pact that Britain set up in the 1950s. The 1,000-word report by Mahmud Bakri on page 1 claims that the United States and Israel have already started talks and contacts to set up the new pact, which reportedly aims to include Turkey and Jordan. It also claims that President Clinton has ordered his officials to deny any reports that the United States will lead a military alliance in the region "until his Administration concludes its contacts and obtains the collective agreement of the countries nominated for membership in the alliance." It then alleges that a "senior U.S. military official" will visit Jordan, Turkey, and Israel on 29 January, that the first steps will be kept secret, and that Israel will be the regional center for military meetings and contacts. According to the report, the Israeli prime minister has already formed a committee from various officials for holding contacts with the United States and that this committee has already started its meetings to prepare Israel's concept of this alliance's objectives and structure. The story then says that the United States will join the alliance militarily through bases already established or through ones to be established and that these will include military mobile bases where troops and equipment can be flexible and move rapidly to face any emergency.

REPORTS DETAIL MB GUIDE'S FUNERAL, SELECTION OF NEW GUIDE

Last week's death of Muslim Brotherhood General Guide Muhammad Hamid Abu-al-Nasr and the election of Mustafa Mashhur as his successor are prominently reported in two separate items on pages 1 and 4. The

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first unattributed report appears on pages 1 and 8 and gives details of the funeral and the selection of the new Muslim Brotherhood general guide. Starting by saying that tens of thousands attended the funeral led by the leaders of Islamic action and political parties, the report then adds: "In an unprecedented step, the masses of brothers declared their selection of Mustafa Mashhur as the new Muslim Brotherhood general guide to succeed Abu- al-Nasr. This was done immediately after the burial of Abu-al-Nasr. Everyone repeated the oath of allegiance and this is the first time that selection was made publicly and in this way. All the brothers took part at the same time and place, in broad daylight, and under the eyes and ears of the security men." The report says that a large delegation from the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan attended as well as some Islamist deputies in the Jordanian parliament, in addition to "the Mufti of Egypt Dr. Sayyid Tantawi" and representatives of the Liberal, Wafd, Nasirite, and Labor parties. It then adds: "Mustafa Mashhur stressed that the Muslim Brotherhood will continue to work toward establishing an Islamic state with the same course followed by the previous guides — al-Banna, al-Hudaybi, al-Talmasani, and Abu—al-Nasr — without violence but with wisdom and good example." The Muslim Brotherhood spokesman Ma'mun al- Hudyabi then paid tribute to the deceased guide and to his perseverance against adversity and imprisonment. Others then followed in paying tribute to Abu-al-Nasr and praising the work of the Muslim Brotherhood in preaching Islam. For example, after praising Abu-al-Nasr, the Wafd Party representative Dr. Nu'man Jum'ah said: "We have not heard that any Muslim brother has taken bribes or sold his conscience." He added: "Egypt's rulers must recognize the brothers because they are a fact that those loyal to this country do not deny and they should not be accused of being propagators of sedition or violence."

The second report on the death of the Muslim Brotherhood general guide appears on page 4. The 2,200-word report by 'Abd-al-Hayy Muhammad, 'Ala' al-Bahhar, and Dawud Hasan views the life and work of Abu-al-Nasr and describes his funeral in great detail, noting that tens of thousands attended it, including Muslim Brotherhood members who managed to come from other governorates "with great difficulties caused by the security forces' harassment, which prevented large numbers of people from coming." It also notes that "large numbers of security forces closed the roads leading to the Rabi'ah al-'Adawiyah Mosque where the funeral was held. Hundreds of soldiers and police officers took up posts in front of the mosque door." The report also speaks of attempts by the security men to "stop the funeral and disperse the mourners" which was foiled when the Muslim Brotherhood leaders intervened and prevented a clash between the police and the mourners.

NEW MB GUIDE SETS OUT PRIORITIES, POLICIES

Also on page 4, the paper carries a 720-word report by Qutb al-'Arabi citing the first press statements made by Mustafa Mashhur following his election as Muslim Brotherhood general guide in which he sets out his priorities and policies.

SIGNATURES COLLECTED DEMANDING NEW PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

A 150-word report on page 1 deals with the opposition parties' decision to collect signatures to demand elections to a new People's Assembly.

MB PRISONERS MOVED FROM PRISON

An unattributed 70-word report on page 1 says that the interior ministry moved the Muslim Brotherhood prisoners from the Mazra'at Tura prison to the Tura prison's annex on 18 January, seizing all their possessions and banning their families from visiting them.

ISLAMIST BANNED FROM TRAVELLING ABROAD

An unattributed 40-word report on page 1 says that the authorities prevented Mahfuz Hilmi, an Islamic Alliance candidate in the recent elections, and his wife from travelling to Brussels last week.

ISRAELI PLANS TO CONTROL SOUTHERN RED SEA VIEWED

In his 5,000-word article on page 2, Chief Editor Majdi Ahmad Husayn views the history of the islands that control the southern entrance to the Red Sea, which were seized by Eritrea from Yemen by force. The main thrust of the article deals with Egypt's lack of action and impotence in coming to the aid of its Yemeni brothers due to its "subservience" and regards this as "another concession to the United States." He details the history of the U.S.-backed Israel's ambitions and actions to control the strategic islands and laments Egypt's inaction in this part of the world, which is strategically important for Egypt.

POST-ELECTION DEVELOPMENTS IN TURKEY REPORTED

A 3,000 article by Muhammad al-Quddusi on page 3 details developments in Turkey following the parliamentary elections and the failure of the Welfare Party to form a coalition government. Another 1,400-word article on the same page lists the lessons to be derived from

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the elections in Turkey, which showed the strength of the Islamic movement and its belief in democracy.

COPT THINKER ON REASONS FOR FORMING AL-WASAT PARTY

A 2,000-word article by Dr. Rafiq Habib appears on page 4, giving the reasons that prompted "some young cadres" to form a new political party called al-Wasat. The writer, identified in the article as a Copt researcher and thinker, is the son of the spiritual head of the Anglican Church in Egypt, a minority among the mainstream Copts who follow the eastern churches rites. Starting by saying that the current stage is decisive in the history of the Arab and Islamic nation, he asserts that the country is facing difficult choices stemming from several internal and external challenges, such as laws being enacted "which will change our life and affect our fate" in addition to external pressures and challenges. He adds that "these challenges make it incumbent on us to take the initiative and present our concept of the future and implement it." He then argues that the nation's renaissance depends on the struggle and efforts of its sons. This is why, he adds, "a group of young cadres of similar ideas agreed on the importance of building a new channel that permits sincere national action committed to the nation's heritage." The channel chosen is the "al-Wasat" party, which according to the writer, is a middle course between extremes. He says: "We belong to a centrist nation and a centrist civilization. We represent an example that is different from the western European-U.S. civilization and from the eastern Asian one. The al-Wasat Party is committed to the centrist civilization as its term of reference and is committed to the middle way as its action strategy." He then lists the important principles governing the new party, the first being the party's program which, he claims, "presents an integrated concept" with new ideas. The second principle is that of opening the way for the younger generation to contribute their views and plans. The third is the party's view of the future of Egypt and of the Arab and Islamic nation. He then goes on to say: "Because the party presents an Islamic rooted and oriented concept, the first thorns on its path are the doubts being raised about accepting others from different religions. In my view, the significance does not lie in the number of Muslims and Copts among the founders but in our understanding of the Islamic civilization. Hence, the party stresses in its program that all of us, Muslims and Copts, belong to a single civilization."

MASHHUR ON SIGNIFICANCE OF RAMADAN, FASTING

In his 1,500-word article on page 5, Muslim Brotherhood general Guide Mustafa Mashhur writes on the significance of Ramadan and on how fasting during this holy month fortifies the spirit and strengthens the will of devout Muslims. He also warns those who fast not to overeat or spend their time idly but to be moderate in their intake of food and not to let fasting affect their work.

ISLAMIC GROUP THREATENS TO HIT U.S. INTERESTS

A 100-word report on page 8 cites the threats made by the Islamic Group [IG] to hit U.S. interests in retaliation for the life sentence given to Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman by a New York court. The unattributed report says that the IG statement "stressed that the plot hatched against 'Abd-al-Rahman will not pass without punishment and that the United States will learn that its citadels and forts will not protect it."

AL-GHAZALI ON OVEREATING DURING RAMADAN

In his "This Is Our Religion" column on page 12, Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazali criticizes the tendency to overeat during the month of Ramadan and urges Muslims to eat moderately and to distribute food to the poor and hungry. He also criticizes those who recite the Koran as if they were singers, without regard to the significance of the words of the Koran.

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 23 Jan

NC2601163896

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 23 January edition of the Arabic language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Measures To Be Taken To Protect Awqaf Property
2. Traffic Policemen To Receive Hot Meals During Ramadan
3. Renowned Preacher al-Sha'rawi Interviewed
4. Report Labels Yeltsin Butcher
5. Column Praises Verdict Against Dr. 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman

MEASURES TO BE TAKEN TO PROTECT AWQAF PROPERTY

A 100-word unattributed report on page 1 quotes new Minister of Awqaf Dr. Muhammad Hamdi Zaqzuq

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saying that measures will be taken to prevent violations of the Awqaf Authority's property and to protect the authority's funds, which must be spent on good causes. This will be done by amending the bylaws that regulate the relationship between the authority and citizens.

TRAFFIC POLICEMEN TO RECEIVE HOT MEALS DURING RAMADAN

A 100-word report by Mustafa 'Alam-al-Din on page 1 says that Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi and Governor of Cairo 'Umar 'Abd-al- Akhir have allocated 40,000 pounds to purchase 90,000 hot meals to be distributed to traffic police on duty during the month of Ramadan.

RENOWNED PREACHER AL-SHA'RAWI INTERVIEWED

On pages 8 and 9, the newspaper publishes a 1,500-word interview with renowned Islamic Preacher Shaykh Muhammad Mutawalli al- Sha'rawi. Two journalists, Basyuni al-Halawani and Musa Hal, ask him questions from various readers. Answering, Shaykh al-Sha'rawi expresses his opinion on various religious issues. Among other things, he says he opposes organ transplants. Asked whether listening to songs is forbidden, he says: If they "stimulate the libido" they are "haram" or forbidden. Answering criticism by secular and communist writers, he tells them to "die from their exasperation," saying their attacks are "an honor for him." He says he is prepared to receive female visitors if they wear Islamic dress and are accompanied by minders, who must be husbands, fathers, or brothers. Answering a question, he says people will stand naked on doomsday. Answering another question, he says Islam opposes the personification of prophets and saints.

REPORT LABELS YELTSIN BUTCHER

A 500-word unattributed report on page 21 discusses the continuing confrontation between Chechen fighters and Russian forces. The report reaches the following conclusions: 1) The Russians have failed to put down the Chechen resistance, which works with "high proficiency." 2) Yeltsin is a "butcher" and is trying to put on a brave face in his confrontation of the Chechens. 3) The Russian army is weak and disorganized. 4) The outgunned and outnumbered Chechen have defeated the Russian forces. 5) The balance of power favors the Chechens. 6) "The whole world, especially the United States, has condemned the Russian forces' destruction of Pervomaiskoye village."

COLUMNIST PRAISES U.S. VERDICT AGAINST DR. 'UMAR 'ABD-AL-RAHMAN

A 250-word column by Ibrahim Nasr on page 23 comments on a thesis submitted by a student who obtained a doctorate in journalism from al-Azhar University. The writer says the thesis "has exposed the erroneous practices of the so-called Islamic Groups tha. have found fertile ground abroad for slandering al-Azhar scholars, distorting Egypt's Islamic image, and harming Islam and Muslims through their papers and bulletins, which they publish in various languages." The writer adds: "The verdict of a federal court in the United States against Mufti of al-Jihad Dr. 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman has condemned terrorism and acquitted Islam."

"This U.S. testimony does justice to the righteous religion [Islam], removing suspicions that it is ignorant."

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat Praises Talks With Peres, Elections

JN2701091696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0700 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat described his meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres at Bayt Hanun [Erez] checkpoint on 24 January as positive. He said the talks dealt with all of the sticky issues, such as the confiscation of land on the pretext of building a dividing wall in Tulkarm and Qalqilyah, the issue of prisoners, and other topics. 'Arafat made these remarks at a weekly cabinet meeting in Gaza yesterday evening.

During the meeting, 'Arafat presented a detailed report on the progress of the 20 January elections. He said the elections made a strong positive impression on both the Arab and international levels because the Palestinian people conducted them democratically and responsibly.

The Council of Ministers praised the elections and commended the Palestinian people's respect for order and discipline and their insistence on exercising their electoral rights in a free and democratic atmosphere.

'Arafat Hopes Final Status Talks Begin Before 4 May

JN2701083596 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0700 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat voiced hope that the final status negotiations will begin before the scheduled date of 4 May. He said Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres stressed Israel's commitment to withdraw from the city of Hebron and from Zones B and C. 'Arafat made this statement at an iftar banquet for

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some National Security officers and soldiers at police headquarters in Gaza.

The president spoke about the responsibilities of the National Security forces to maintain order, enhance stability, and entrench the pillars of the Palestinian state that has been on the horizon since the successful elections.

Palestinian Affairs: More on 26 Jan Cabinet Meeting

JN2701154496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1110 GMT 27 Jan 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] The National Authority's Council of Ministers commended the high turnout of voters at polling stations to cast their votes and exercise their rights on election day.

During a meeting chaired by His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat at the Presidency in Gaza last night, the Council of Ministers expressed great satisfaction with the outcome of the elections, and also with the discipline that marked these elections.

On the topics discussed by the Council of Ministers, Labor Minister Dr. Samir Ghawshah said:

[Begin Ghawshah recording] The Palestinian National Authority's Council of Ministers discussed recent political developments. President 'Arafat reviewed the outcome of his recent talks with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres. The conferees touched on a host of topics discussed with Peres. The Council also reviewed several Israeli violations and measures, including the seizure of the road in front of Rachel's tomb, land confiscations in the northern West Bank, and the plan to set up a large settlement west of the city of Ramallah.

The Council of Ministers also discussed elections. The Council saluted our people for their splendid participation and turnout on election day. The Council asserted that this democratic process sets the stage for promoting the performance of the National Authority in the direction of creating an independent state. The conferees also addressed a host of practices and measures that were deemed undemocratic. They were submitted to the competent legal agencies, particularly the Election Appeals Court.

The Council also reviewed some economic activities and the functioning of various ministries. [end recording]

For his part, Culture Minister Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh said:

[Begin 'Abd-Rabbuh recording] We debated the outcome of the meeting held between President Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and the topics discussed during this meeting. We underlined two basic issues; namely, the need to confront the Israeli settler expansionist activities in various Palestinian areas in the West Bank, especially in the areas of Tulkarm, Qalqilyah, and Nabulus. Moreover, there are expansionist activities in Hebron, not to mention the flagrant violation currently under way in the heart of Hebron in the area of Rachel's tomb. In this area, expansionist work is under way to divide the main road leading to Bethlehem and Hebron. This must be brought to a complete halt. We will take measures to end this abnormal situation there. [end recording]

Finance Minister Muhammad Zuhdi al-Nashashibi asserted that the National Authority will submit a list of the names of all Palestine National Council [PNC] members [to Israeli authorities] to facilitate their repatriation and residence in the homeland. He indicated that the Council of Ministers was notified of progress in the Syrian-Israeli talks. He noted the statements Peres made during his recent meeting with President 'Arafat regarding his government's commitment to the deadline for withdrawal from the Hebron Governorate. He went on to say that the Council of Ministers discussed the confiscation of the identity cards of some Jerusalemites who were staying outside Jerusalem, stressing that the National Authority will address this issue.

Palestinian Affairs: Official Rejects Peres Statements on Jerusalem

JN2801213796 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hasan 'Asfur, director general of the Negotiations Department, today said that the Oslo agreement and all its supplemental annexes confirm that occupied Jerusalem is one of the topics to be discussed in the final negotiations.

This came in reply to a statement by Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres in which he said there will be no future negotiations over the city.

'Asfur said that Peres should be more precise, in political terms, when he talks about the final phase negotiations. He added that Israel's unilateral determination of the results of the final phase negotiations is a major threat against the peace process.

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DFLP's Hawatimah Rejects Israel's Conditional Return Offer

NC2801190796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1750 GMT 28 Jan 96

[Telephone interview with Nayif Hawatimah, secretary general of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, by Jihad al-'Idan; place and date not given; from the "News and Reports" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-'Idan] Dr. Hawatimah, you refused to return to the self-rule areas under the Zionist conditions of amending the Palestinian covenant. What is your viewpoint in this regard?

[Hawatimah] We have declared that the right of return is a sacred right by all our people who live in the Diaspora, foremost among them being the leaders and cadres of the Palestinian revolution, the PLO coalition, and the entire national Palestinian movement. We have struggled for this before Palestinian, Arab, Islamic, and world public opinion. We called on many world countries to put pressure on the government of the Israeli enemy to break its decision preventing our return. They have built a great wall of China in our face, but opened all avenues and crossing points before the Oslo advocates, 'Arafat and his supporters. This continued to be the position of the Zionist and Israeli authorities until the self-rule council elections, which were held under Israeli terms and restrictions. On 21 January 1996, enemy Prime Minister Shim'on Peres stated that he is prepared to open the crossing points to leaders and members of the Palestine National Council [PNC] for them to return to the self-rule areas, provided that a meeting of the PNC is held to revoke the PLO Covenant. Immediately afterward, we declared our rejection of any Israeli conditions and stated that the right of return is a sacred right not subject to any Israeli restrictions or conditions. At the same time, we said no to a PNC meeting under occupation and called for holding a meeting of the PNC at any Arab, Islamic, or European capital away from occupation. In very clear language, we said no to canceling the PLO Covenant, which is the political framework that has brought us together and continues to bring together the Palestinian people both inside the occupied Palestinian territories and in the Diaspora.

[Al-'Idan] Some news sources have reported that Israeli Army Radio and the Israeli paper YEDI'OT AHARONOT conducted an interview with you. How true is this and does this signal a change in your position regarding the taboos that existed before?

[Hawatimah] For us taboos are taboos. This is because the Palestinian national and revolutionary standards of judgment are known and well-established by the UN Human Rights Convention, which gives peoples the right to self-determination and to struggle with all means toward that end. As for your question, we have made public remarks to all international news agencies. Some Israeli and Zionist news media picked up these remarks from international news agencies. For our part, we say that our people's rights are known according to international legality and the peoples' sacred and principled right to liberate their land, their right to self-determination, and independence. We say no to any form of openness or normalization with the Israeli, Zionist, expansionist enemy so long as the rights of our Palestinian people are denied, wasted, and confiscated. We have to continue the struggle and jihad to obtain our people's rights. [passage omitted]

Al-Husayni Confirms 'Unofficial' Talks on Jerusalem

TA2601161396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Faysal al-Husayni says that unofficial contacts are taking place between Israel and the Palestinians on the issue of Jerusalem. He said that academics from both sides are taking part.

Ziyad Abu-Zayyad said the talks on the issue of Jerusalem have taken place in Jerusalem as well as abroad, and officials from both sides have taken part.

Faysal al-Husayni on 'Unofficial' Talks With Israel

JN2701150196 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1120 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Faysal al-Husayni, official in charge of the Jerusalem file, asserted that unofficial Palestinian-Israeli contacts are under way. More details are included in the following interview with al-Husayni:

[Begin recording] [Al-Husayni] The thing in question cannot be called talks or negotiations. It is only intermittent meetings between Palestinian and Israeli academics, sometimes with the involvement of Western academics. Some academics would come up with a certain proposal and set it forth before the Palestinian side. Such a proposal, be it Israeli or Western, would be examined. Consequently, what is taking place is sort of sounding out views. What is going on is an exploration of views. We are listening to the views of the other side. Nonetheless, this has not risen to the level of negotiations.

['Asif Humaydi] Zayyad Abu-Zayyad, who was recently elected to the [Legislative] Council, said that some individuals holding ministerial portfolios have taken part in these talks.

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[Al-Husayni] I am not aware of such a development. Consequently, it is up to brother Abu-Zayyad to elaborate on this issue.

[Humaydi] So, we can say that the aim of this communication or these talks is to prepare the groundwork for the final status talks.

[Al-Husayni] That is true. The aim is to prepare the groundwork for the final status talks. I believe it is extremely necessary for us to do our utmost to explore the views and ideas of the other side so that we may embark on the tough negotiations confidently.

[Humaydi] Mr. Faysal al-Husayni: Have any initial scenarios or plans been drawn up for the final status talks?

[Al-Husayni] As a matter of fact, there are many ideas in this regard. Nonetheless, we cannot say that certain scenarios have been adopted thus far.

[Humaydi] Thank you very much, Mr. Faysal al-Husayni. [end recording]

PA's al-Husayni Says Talks on Jerusalem 'Unofficial'

NC2801223496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2145 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 28 Jan (MENA)—Faysal al-Husayni, official in charge of the Jerusalem file in the Palestinian Authority [PA], has denied any concessions by the PA to the Israelis on Jerusalem.

In an interview with AL-AHRAM to be published tomorrow, al-Husayni stressed that following the withdrawal of the occupation troops from the West Bank cities, the PA's negotiating position on Jerusalem is now very strong and serves future negotiations.

Asked if any negotiations are now under way between the PA and the Israelis over Jerusalem prior to the final status negotiations, the Palestinian official said that many opinion polls are being conducted and feelers sent. They [the Israelis] are making several proposals through middlemen, he added. He noted that these types of talks are unofficial and being conducted by academicians from both sides with a view to preparing a number of formulas to be ready when the final status negotiations begin in May.

Regarding the wide gap between the Palestinian and Israeli views on Jerusalem, al-Husayni said that the Israelis have to reach an agreement on Jerusalem if they want to live in peace, adding that this is only a matter of time. Al-Husayni denied that the low turnout among Jerusalem voters during the Palestinian elections had been the result of psychological reasons caused by delaying negotiations on Jerusalem to the final stage. He pointed out that the low turnout was the result of terrorist operations conducted by the occupation troops, the intensive security presence, and the settlers' threats. He referred to the Jerusalem residents' struggle against the occupation for long years and their rejection of the city's Jeudaization.

Al-Husayni pointed out that since June 1967 the Israeli Knesset has been taking measures to Jeudaize and change the features of the holy city. To isolate it politically from the West Bank, a special Jerusalem identity card is being issued, and special taxation and customs laws are being imposed on its residents to isolate the city economically. He added that Israel has dissolved Jerusalem's Arab Council and transferred its staff to the Israeli municipality. In addition, some official government institutions have been transferred to Jerusalem, the Israeli educational and cultural curricula have been applied, and the Jerusalem Electricity Company has been dissolved. The greatest challenge came in July 1980, when Jerusalem was named Israel's eternal capital, he added.

Al-Husayni noted that Israel tried hard to finish off the Islamic and Christian currents in Jerusalem by conducting archaeological digs around and under the al-Aqsa Mosque, seizing Islamic and Christian property and monasteries, and destroying entire Arab neighborhoods, such as the al-Sharq, al-Bashur, and al-Magharibah neighborhoods. Hundreds of houses have been razed to open a big square before the wailing wall, he added, noting that the Palestinian Archaeological Museum has been seized.

Asked about the Palestinian position on Jerusalem during the final status negotiations in May, al-Husayni emphasized that since the start of the Arab-Israeli conflict the Palestinian stance on Jerusalem has not changed. It seeks to restore Arab and Islamic sovereignty over Jerusalem, which is a fundamental and essential condition for any peaceful solution in the region, he added. He noted that in addition the Islamic nature of the city must be secured to resist the Israeli attempts and practices, adding that this is a collective Islamic responsibility. He noted that the Palestinian stance is based on securing the rights of the followers of the heavenly religions in Jerusalem, adding that these rights were preserved in the last 13 centuries under Arab and Islamic rule of the city. In contrast, he added, the Israeli measures and practices in Jerusalem have undermined these rights.

Asked about the present relationship between the PA and Jerusalem, the Palestinian official said that the PA attaches importance to Jerusalem's place in any devel-

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opment plan. This is because it is an Arab city subject to the international resolutions calling for Israeli withdrawal from it. He stressed that all Palestinian ministries and institutions take Jerusalem into consideration in their future plans because it is a matter of sovereignty and because the withdrawal of the occupation troops from it is a matter of time.

Palestinian Legislative Council Member Denies Secret Talks on Final Status

JN2701145096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hasan 'Asfur, member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, denied that there are secret contacts with the Israelis on the final status negotiations. He said the negotiations will begin on 4 May.

The member of the Legislative Council said President Yasir 'Arafat will hold intensive consultations to form a new council of ministers that will be presented to the Legislative Council for a confidence vote.

Al-Za'nun: PNC To Discuss Israeli 'Negligence,' Not Charter

TA2801095496 Gaza AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH in Arabic 25 Jan 96 pp 1, 17

[Report by Munir Abu-Rizq]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Wafa, AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH — Salim al-Za'nun, speaker of the Palestine National Council [PNC], has expressed skepticism about Israel's declaration on the return of all PNC members to the homeland. In a statement to AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH, he said that this declaration should not be dealt with in a spontaneous manner because PNC members must, above all else, be allowed to return as citizens and not, as being rumored, to attend the PNC meeting devoted to amending the National Charter.

The PNC speaker denied what press circles had attributed to a Palestinian diplomatic source to the effect that the PNC's upcoming meeting will be held in Cairo.

He affirmed that this meeting will take place on the homeland's soil and nowhere else. He pointed out that the PNC's convocation should be preceded by joint talks to determine the appropriate date for the meeting following the return of PNC members within a reasonable timeframe.

He added that dates for the Israeli side are not sacred, since Israel has handed over only 30 percent of what is due to the Palestinians in the West Bank and 70 percent in the Gaza Strip.

Al-Za'nun expressed the belief that instead of amending the charter, the PNC meeting slated to be held two months after the Palestinian elections (in accordance with Oslo B) might discuss Israeli negligence in implementing Oslo.

On the practical measures adopted so far for the return of PNC members, al-Za'nun said that 167 members have expressed their readiness to return and have delivered their documents to the PNC office in Amman. Their names will be submitted to the Israeli side through the liaison committees so that we can ascertain whether it will agree to their repatriation or this is merely Israeli propaganda. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Authority, Hamas Set Up Liaison Committee

NC2801104396 Paris AFP in English 0940 28 Jan GMT 96

[Report by Sakher Abu el-Oun]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Gaza City, Gaza Strip, Jan 28 (AFP) — Yasir 'Arafat has reached a reconciliation agreement with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], authorizing the radical Islamic movement to open an office and newspaper here and releasing 15 of its militants, officials said Sunday [28 January].

Hamas officials said 15 militants were released from Palestinian jails early Sunday, including Shaykh Ahmad Nimr Hamdan, a leading Hamas figure detained two months ago after sharply criticizing 'Arafat in a speech during Friday prayers.

Officials from both sides said that as part of the reconciliation agreement, Hamas and the Palestinian Authority (PA) also set up a liaison committee to resolve differences and prepare for municipal elections due later this year.

The committee held a first meeting Saturday and was due to have further discussions later Sunday, officials said.

Hamas and PA officials said 'Arafat ordered the release of the Hamas members after meeting here Friday with three senior leaders of the movement, Mahmud al-Zahhar, Sayyid Abu-Musamih and Muhammad Shamah.

He also agreed to a request that Hamas, the acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement, be permitted to open an office and an official newspaper here, they said.

Hamas officials described the planned office as a "media office" to be set up in Gaza City, while the daily AL-AYYAM, run by a close 'Arafat aide, said it would be a headquarters for the Islamic movement.

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Hamas officials and AL-AYYAM said the two sides also set up a formal liaison committee to follow up on reconciliation talks late last year in Cairo between the PA and Hamas.

Saturday's meeting was attended by the three Hamas leaders, all of whom were present at the Cairo talks, and by PA secretary-general al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, PA military intelligence chief Musa 'Arafat and other top security officers.

A Hamas official said the committee met "to follow up on Cairo and to resolve the remaining problems between the PA and Hamas."

"They discussed how to keep Palestinian national areas secure and the release of prisoners," he said, adding that the meeting "was very fruitful and positive."

He also said the two sides began "to prepare for upcoming municipal elections and to draft an election law for the polls."

Municipal elections are due to be held in the PA-controlled areas of the Gaza Strip and West Bank before the summer in what is expected to be a heated contest between Hamas and the PA. [passage omitted]

Hamas' al-Zahhar on Meeting with PA, Municipal Elections

JN2801161996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1030 GMT 28 Jan 96

[Telephone interview with Mahmud al-Zahhar, spokesman for the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in Gaza by Hasan Abu-Zayid; date not given—recorded, from the "With the Midday Events" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Abu-Zayid] The Palestinian police last night released 12 Hamas detainees. Among those released is Shaykh Ahmad Nimr from Khan Yunus. The Palestinian police took this move after the meeting that was held last night between representatives of the Palestinian Authority [PA], including al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim and Salim al-Za'nun, and Hamas representatives, including Sayyid Abu-Musamih and Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar, Hamas spokesman in the Gaza strip.

[Al-Zahhar] The first topic that was discussed at the meeting was the formation of a committee to follow up the Cairo agreement and lay down the foundation for the post-Cairo phase. A joint PA-Hamas committee was set up to follow up what was agreed upon in Cairo. Also, another Palestinian committee was set up. It comprises most of the effective factions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Its aim is to draft a municipal elections law, which has been the focus of recent debates. A final draft is hoped to be reached so preparations can start for the municipal elections, which are expected to take place three to four months from now, God willing. The committee also discussed the possibility of providing a positive atmosphere on the occasion of 'Id al-Fitr and Ramadan by releasing the largest number possible of detainees so that the 'Id al-Fitr would come in better circumstances, God willing.

[Abu-Zayid] Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar, have you discussed the issue of reaching an agreement between Hamas and the PA and the possibility of signing such an agreement?

[Al-Zahhar] We had an agreement with them in Cairo. I believe that Hamas honored its promise, and the elections proceeded very well. I believe that the atmosphere now is more positive than ever before. We hope that this atmosphere will continue to prevail during the upcoming municipal elections so that every person and every movement will have an opportunity to contribute to the phase of constructing what the long years of the occupation have destroyed. Meanwhile, all persons and movements will maintain their political stands.

[Abu-Zayid] Regarding the appointment of representatives from the Palestinian opposition — the Islamic Jihad, Hamas, and even the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine — in jobs in the PA, has this issue been raised?

[Al-Zahhar] No. This issue has not been discussed. All jobs must be opened for all Palestinians. I am talking about administrative jobs. Jobs must not be given to a single party. Jobs must be for all people. I believe that this is a logical demand which must be met.

[Abu-Zayid] Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar, what about giving Hamas or opposition members PA ministerial portfolios?

[Al-Zahhar] Regarding the ministries themselves, Hamas' stand on this issue is still the same and unchanging. Regarding other administrative jobs in all institutions, I believe that those institutions must be opened for all Palestinian individuals regardless of their orientations so that the damages left by the long years of the occupation are repaired.

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Palestinian Affairs: Talks on Anti-Authority Coalition Under Way

JN2901094696 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 29 Jan 96 pp 1, 7

[Report by Lamis K. Anduni]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] East Jerusalem — Less than a week after the announcement of the results of the Palestinian legislative council elections, leading independents have started deliberations with non-conformist Fatah deputies to form a bloc that promotes democracy, social justice and will seek to alter the Palestinian negotiating strategy with Israel.

Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi and 'Abd-al-Jawad Salih have been deliberating with independents and a number of Fatah deputies in an effort to form a bloc that will prevent the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) from totally dominating the council.

The success of these efforts will highly depend on the readiness of Fatah deputies who had defied Yasir 'Arafat's orders not to contest the elections to form coalitions outside the Fatah movement, observers say.

Fatah "independents," as the deputies who ran outside the Fatah official call themselves, say they are open for cooperation with independents, especially that their victory without support from Mr. 'Arafat had gained them new strength and independence.

If such a bloc is formed, divisions within Fatah that have been deepened during the election campaign will take a new form, breaking Mr. 'Arafat's expected grip on a council dominated by his movement.

Fatah officials and political analysts believe that Fatah will be divided to at least two blocs tied to public and private interest groups outside the council unless Mr. 'Arafat succeeds in co-opting "the rebellious deputies."

Mr. 'Arafat has successfully co-opted a good number of the young leaders of the intifada through political appointments in PNA departments and security agencies.

But some of these young leaders had remained defiant and contested the elections in spite of orders to pull out. Two of the representatives of this trend, Musa Kadura and 'Abd al-Fatah Hamayil, won with high votes in the Ramallah area and are now engaged in the deliberations to form a democratic coalition in the council.

"I have no reservations whatsoever in finding common grounds with non-Fatah council members. In fact we have a lot in common," says Mr. Hamayil, who has become a symbol to non-conformists in Fatah since winning the highest votes in regional Fatah elections in late 1994. Mr. 'Arafat had then stopped Fatah regional elections after the defeat of his loyalists in Ramallah.

Fatah members who are ready to work with independents include Salah al-'Ta'mari, a former military commander who secured the highest votes in Bethlehem, again despite instructions by Mr. 'Arafat not to run.

But while Dr. 'Abd-al-Shafi and Mr. Salih are critical of the Oslo agreements, most Fatah members who ran against Mr. 'Arafat's will say that they have total confidence in Mr. 'Arafat's long-term negotiating strategy.

"I have no doubts in 'Arafat's unwavering commitment to our national interests. 'Arafat will not compromise the Palestinian national rights," says Mr. al-Ta'mari.

Consequently it is unclear if the Fatah independents will back any attempt to change Mr. 'Arafat negotiating tactics.

But Fatah activists like Mr. al-Hamayil, Mr. Qaddurah and Mr. al-Ta'mari agree with Dr. 'Abd-al-Shafi on one fundamental point that could form the basis of a broad coalition — to lay the basis for a democratic system.

"The elections have unleashed the Palestinian giant and triggered a national democratic revolution," says Mr. al-Ta'mari.

Along with Dr. 'Abd-al-Shafi, Mr. Salih, Hanan 'Ashrawi and Fatah Central Committee member 'Abbas Zaki, Mr. al-Ta'mari is considered one of the top leaders of the council. All except Mr. Zaki were not endorsed in any way by the PNA and they could form a strong leadership.

However, Mr. Zaki is not excluded as stronger player in some form of a collective leadership of the council. Mr. Zaki, a former critic of the Oslo agreements, appeared to have shifted his position after he returned to Hebron last September.

But the election day indicated that Mr. 'Arafat did not trust Mr. Zaki's change of heart. Even though Mr. Zaki was on the official Fatah list, there was a campaign against him allegedly orchestrated by the preventive security force on the elections day.

When this reporter visited Hebron and the surrounding villages on that day, there were strong rumors that Mr. 'Arafat had withdrawn his support for Mr. Zaki. The rumors were backed by the fact that many copies of the official Fatah list obtained by the JORDAN TIMES did not include Mr. Zaki's name. In some lists Mr. Zaki's name was scrapped and Mr. Zaki's supports claimed that in the first hour of the balloting security agents were telling people that Mr. Zaki had pulled out.

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Such accounts were heard in all areas where Fatah independents who are critical of the PNA were running. The hidden war within Fatah left many bitter feelings, but in Ramallah, Hebron and Bethlehem the targets of the rumors emerged victorious.

Nevertheless, such PNA tactics, according to the winners, showed them the struggle for democracy was even more difficult than was anticipated.

In fact the campaigns against critics of the PNA among the Fatah candidates were an important factor that had convinced them, for now at least, to cooperate with Dr. 'Abd-al-Shafi's drive to resist what the Gaza physician who captured the highest votes in the elections calls "Arafat's autocratic authority."

Moreover, a good number of Fatah winners, especially those who ran outside the official list, are convinced that there were many violations that were supported by the local authorities.

"There has been foul play in the sense that there were candidates that the authority wanted to win and they were found to be losing. Thus everything was done to ensure their win," says a winner who asked for anonymity.

According to sources from Fatah and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), polling centres in many areas, especially remote villages, remained opened beyond the 7 o'clock deadline to bring "supporters' of some key candidates who were losing.

Some even claim that the riddle of the "missing ballot boxes' in Hebron and other areas had more to do with foul play than anything. In Khan Yunus, an attempt by a leading Fatah candidate to count ballots "in a missing box" led to a limited armed confrontation. According to a top PLO official, Mr. 'Arafat had to personally interfere to defuse the situation. The "missing box," it turned out, did not include enough votes to ensure the victory of the Fatah candidate there, PLO officials said.

contradictory results also raised many questions. The official Palestinian radio, within less than hour after vote counting started, announced that Rawiyah al-Shawwa from Gaza a winner but later declared her a loser. She contested the results and was announced a winner 48 hours later. Marwan Kanafani, Mr. 'Arafat's former spokesman, was also announced a loser first but a winner in less half an hour later.

Such incidents were criticised by some Fatah winners who fear that Fatah and the council could be dominated by a clique of traditional Fatah leaders who have come back with Mr. 'Arafat from the diaspora.

But that does not mean that the opposition bloc in the legislative council will necessarily reflect a division between homegrown leaders and those who come back from the diaspora.

According to the results, at least 17 of the winners are leaders who were brought to the fore by the intifada. But many of them had been totally won over by Mr. 'Arafat and are not expected to join the aspired-for coalition for democracy.

"There will be a sharp polarisation inside Fatah," predicts Mr. al-Hamayil. "There will be those who will assume new roles based on personal interests and those who will choose to find new means to continue our political struggle for independence."

The second category, in his view, will form coalitions beyond Fatah. If his prediction is true, the next stage will witness the emergence of a new force that will move beyond all of the current Palestinian factional lines.

Al-Maliki Urges Opposition To Support Palestinian Authority

JN2801102096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0900 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Riyad al-Maliki, one of the leaders of the Popular Front [for the Liberation of Palestine], said the Palestinian National Authority wants to use appropriate tactics to establish a Palestinian state. The authority, he added, is investigating the possibility of establishing a Palestinian entity based on the Oslo agreement and on reality.

In a statement to Voice of Palestine this morning, al-Maliki called on the Palestinian opposition to admit that changes conducive to the establishment of a Palestinian state have taken place. He also called on the opposition to respond to the popular demand to unify its ranks, deal with facts on the ground, and avoid self-seclusion. Dr. al-Maliki said the Palestinian people and the political forces and factions should support the National Authority and the Palestinian negotiator prior to the start of negotiations over the final status of the Palestinian territories.

Al-Za'nun Presents Conditions for PNC Convention

TA2901110596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Salim al-Za'nun, acting speaker of the Palestine National Council [PNC], has presented four conditions for the convention of the PNC: the Palestinian Authority's deployment throughout the West Bank and Gaza; the release of 6,000 security prisoners; the granting of permits to all PNC members to return

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to the territories as citizens; and the completion of the elections process for the PNC in the territories.

Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas], one of the PLO leaders, has said that expediting the process by which the permanent status of the territories is determined will make it easier on the Palestinians to amend the covenant clauses. This was reported by our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem.

Official Says 'Arafat Permits Hamas To Open Office in Gaza

TA2801074796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A senior PLO official says Yasir 'Arafat has decided to permit Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] to open an office in Gaza and to publish a newspaper. Delegations of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas met yesterday and dealt with security measures and on the release of Hamas members from jails in the Palestinian areas.

Israeli Statement on Jewish Suburb in Ramallah Denounced

JN2801111396 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1000 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian Information Ministry has denounced Israeli Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer's announcement that a religious suburb for ultra-orthodox Jews will be established on land belonging to villages west of Ramallah. The ministry called on the Israeli Government to counter the Israeli right-wing mentality in the interest of continuing a balanced peace between the Palestinians and Israelis.

Palestinian Affairs: 500 Fatah Members To Leave Lebanon Soon

NC2901111096 Beirut AL-ANWAR in Arabic 27 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Colonel Sultan Abu-al-'Aynayn, Fatah Movement official in Lebanon, said yesterday that 500 Fatah fighters will soon leave Lebanon for the self-rule areas.

In a statement at the Palestinian refugee camp of al-Rashidiyah, Col. Abu-al-'Aynayn said that the return of the 500-strong force is imminent. He added that a PLO leadership delegation might visit Lebanon and Syria to hold serious and responsible talks about this issue. The Palestinian official said that the delegation is expected to arrive in Lebanon within a few days.

Islamic Jihad Member Says No Intention To Halt Armed Jihad

NC2701183596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine, through its Secretary General Dr. Ramadan 'Abdallah, has stated that armed jihad remains its strategic option and that there is no intention to halt it either temporarily or permanently.

Dr. 'Abdallah was answering questions by the Lebanese magazine AL-SHIRA' in an interview published today. He said Yasir 'Arafat's arrival in Gaza and the West Bank has complicated the action of the Palestinian movements opposed to the occupation because of the Palestinian Authority's oppressive measures against the mujahidin.

'Arafat Reportedly Says Badr Forces To Return 'Soon'

JN2901112096 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 29 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] AL-MAJD learned that during his short visit to Amman, Yasir 'Arafat asked to meet with Brigadier General Muhammad Qudsiyah, commander of the Badr Forces in Jordan. A 15-minute meeting was held at the Palestinian guest house in Amman during which 'Arafat listened to the demands of the commanders and officers of the Badr Forces, especially concerning the return of these forces to the self-rule areas as soon as possible.

A Palestinian Liberation Army source said Qudsiyah warned 'Arafat against the deterioration of the financial and administrative conditions within the Badr Forces' ranks and the possibility of wide-scale confusion, similar to what happened last summer when some trends in the army called for disbanding the officers and giving them their full compensation, while other trends called for waiting until the Palestinian Authority is in control of the rest of the West Bank cities and villages this year. The source said that the situation is unbearable and rumors are widespread among the 1,700-strong Badr Forces.

The source said Qudsiyah asked 'Arafat to make a firm decision on the forces' return to the self-rule areas and to make speedy contacts with Israel to expedite their return, especially since the Palestinian Authority needs more soldiers to maintain law and order in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The same source told AL-MAJD that 'Arafat assured the Badr Forces commander that the soldiers and officers will return to the homeland soon. [passage omitted]

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PNC Speaker Says 164 Members in Territories

JN2601180096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Salim al-Za'nun, Palestine National Council [PNC] acting speaker, said that the names of PNC members were forwarded to President Yasir 'Arafat in order to take the necessary measures for their return home. Al-Za'nun explained that of the 450 PNC members, only 164 are now in Palestine.

AL-QUDS: 'Arafat Remarks on State 'Not Coincidental'

TA2801120896 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 26 Jan 96 p 13

[Editorial: "The Required Balance in the Peace Steps"]

[FBIS Translated Text] President 'Arafat's statements after his meeting two days ago with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres are a genuine expression of inalienable Palestinian aspirations and demands, foremost of all the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. From this aspect, those statements reinforce remarks by a number of senior Palestinian officials who expected that this state would be proclaimed in the foreseeable future and before the end of the interim stage, within a short or long timeframe.

It is certain that raising this strategic Palestinian demand at this specific time is not coincidental. Moreover, it did not come about in a vacuum, because it is a step that complements what the peace process has achieved to date. The implementation of the Taba agreement is about to be concluded. Likewise, the Israeli side is demanding that the Palestinian National Charter be amended and articles hostile to Israel be canceled. For this reason, it has adopted measures and steps that it believes will facilitate the charter's modification, including permitting members of the Palestine National Council in the diaspora to return to the homeland to participate in the council's meeting devoted to this purpose.

If the Israeli side is determined that the charter be amended, which is above all a Palestinian internal affair connected to the origins and circumstances stemming from Israel's inception in 1948 and the ensuing expulsion and migration of Palestinians, it is logical that, on the one hand, such a step be accompanied by an Israeli commitment to respect the Palestinian people's aspiration in establishing their independent state. On the other hand, a just solution should be found to the issues under contention, such as the issue of the refugees, settlements, borders, crossings, and so forth.

In his statements, President 'Arafat stressed that real peace is not the one in which leaders and senior officials from this or that side agree, but a peace of which the Palestinian masses become convinced and feel its positive results. Therefore, the Israeli side should understand the Palestinians' legitimate national aspirations, and the coming peace steps should be balanced in their consideration of these aspirations, whereby the final and strategic goals toward which the Palestinian people have been moving during the past five decades will not be ignored or disregarded.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Damascus Radio Reports Resumption of Wye Plantation Talks

JN2601204096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1915 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Syrian-Israeli talks resumed at Wye Plantation in Maryland near Washington, D.C., this evening. The talks will be suspended on 27 and 28 January and will resume on 29 January.

It was announced in Washington that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will begin a new tour of the Middle East to push the peace process between Syria and Israel ahead. The Israeli radio said Christopher is expected to leave Washington 2 February on a tour during which he will visit Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Serbia before leaving for the Middle East. During his tour of the region, the U.S. secretary of State is expected to visit Saudi Arabia.

Robert Pelletreau, U.S. assistant secretary of state for Middle East Affairs, has voiced optimism over the Syrian-Israeli peace talks. He said there is now a productive framework and a comfortable atmosphere at Wye Plantation in Maryland.

AL-NAHAR reports from Washington today that Pelletreau explained that the United States will support any preparations for activating the Lebanese track. Pelletreau said that the U.S. objective is to reach a comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Syria's al-Mu'allim Views 1st Round of Maryland Talks

JN2601214696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2115 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington—The first round of talks on the Syrian-Israeli track of the peace process, which was held in the U.S. State of Maryland over the past three days, ended this afternoon. Talks will resume at the same place on 29 January, Monday, and

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they could last until Wednesday in the presence of U.S. mediators.

In a statement to the director general of the SYRIAN ARAB NEWS AGENCY, SANA, Walid al-Mu'allim, head of the Syrian side to the talks, said that this round seriously and profoundly dealt with the issue of security arrangements. He added that the two sides expressed their positions on the issue of security arrangements on both sides of the 4 June 1967 line after the Israeli occupation forces withdraw from the Golan. The talks showed the existing difficulties and gaps between the views of both sides regarding these arrangements.

Al-Mu'allim continued: This round provided an opportunity to explain the position of each side and explore the vision of each side regarding the various aspects of these arrangements. It was agreed that during the weekend, Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator of the peace process, will hold unofficial consultations with both sides as a prelude to resuming the talks on Monday.

Syria's Chief Delegate to Wye Talks Cites 'Wide' Gaps in Positions

JN2801072796 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0515 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington — Walid al-Mu'allim, head of the Syrian delegation to the peace talks in Maryland, said last night that Dennis Ross, special U.S. coordinator for the Middle East peace process, will meet with the heads of the Syrian and Israeli delegations today in an attempt to fill the wide gaps between the positions of both sides.

In press statements, al-Mu'allim added that last week's talks were exploratory talks, during which each side reviewed its position clearly and in detail. He explained that the gaps between the two delegations are related to security arrangements. Talks on these arrangements have been serious, he said, but there have been sizable difficulties due to Israeli exaggeration about these arrangements.

Senior Israeli Source: 'No Chance' for Breakthrough at Wye

TA2701122196 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0900 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] There is no chance for a breakthrough in the Israeli-Syrian negotiations, a senior political element said this morning following another round of talks at Wye Plantation.

Jerusalem officials have received a report from Washington according to which the team that discussed the security arrangements has made no progress. Chief Syrian delegate Walid al-Mu'allim said the talks on the security arrangements were serious and thorough, despite difficulties and despite the gaps between the two parties' stands.

Our political correspondent Udi Segal reports that U.S. coordinator Dennis Ross will convene with each side separately over the weekend, in anticipation of the talks' resumption on 29 January.

Israel Sees 'Deep Gaps' in Latest Wye Plantation Round

TA2701194796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Uri Savir and Walid al-Mu'allim, the chief delegates to the Maryland talks, will hold intensive contacts tomorrow in anticipation of the resumption of the talks at Wye Plantation on 29 January.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that at the end of the first round of talks, political circles in Israel say that deep gaps remain between the sides on the security and water issues, whereas some progress was made in the working team dealing with normalization issues where Israel is represented by Yo'el Singer.

It was further reported that the atmosphere in the talks is good. Nevertheless, political circles assess that there are slim chances of attaining a breakthrough within a timetable compatible with the election campaigns in Israel and the United States.

Our correspondent adds that Major General Dani Yatom, who represented the prime minister in the talks, is returning home and that Israel will be represented in the talks on security issues by Maj. Gen. 'Uzi Dayan. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will be returning to Israel on 5 February for another shuttle mission.

[Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew at 1800 GMT on 27 January carries a brief interview with Savir conducted by Ya'aqov Ahime'ir upon the Israeli delegation's return from Wye Plantation to Washington on 26 January. Asked how these talks were different from the previous round, Savir replies: "In both atmosphere and content. The atmosphere was less formal and the content was deeper. As I said before, this is the beginning of progress."

[Asked to comment on Foreign Minister Baraq's skepticism about the talks, Savir says: "The foreign minister is not being skeptical, but expressing Israel's positions and his belief that progress should be made cautiously, which is what we are doing."

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[Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew at 1800 GMT on 27 January adds: "In the talks held this week at Wye Plantation the Syrians evinced more openness on the issue of Hizballah, but no understanding was reached on the security arrangements. Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen adds that the Syrians rejected Israel's demand for a deep demilitarization of their troops all the way to the outskirts of Damascus."]

Rabinovich on 'Slight Progress' at Wye, U.S. Aid to Israel

TA2801074196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli-Syrian talks seem to have become stuck once again. The unofficial consultations between the two delegations will continue in Washington today, mostly via the Americans. The Wye Plantation talks will resume tomorrow. Our correspondent in Washington Hayim Zissowitz reports that only slight progress has been made:

[Begin recording] [Zissowitz] The issue of who will control the Golan Heights water resources was not raised at all during the three days of negotiations last week. Two other issues that were discussed are the Golan Heights security arrangements and normalization — that is, the quality of peace. This is what delegation member Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich has to say:

[Rabinovich] Some progress was indeed made on the issue of normalization, or the quality of peace. I would not say that no progress was achieved on the issue of security arrangements, because we are still at a very early stage in which the sides are presenting their conceptual positions.

[Zissowitz] No details were provided regarding the nature of the progress made on the issue of the quality of peace. In any event, the sides did not agree on any of the points discussed in last week's talks.

[Rabinovich] We took with us the questions and ideas raised during the talks and are using the weekend to try to work out partial and tentative understandings, as well as to formulate questions, in anticipation of the Secretary of State's upcoming visit to the region.

[Zissowitz] Secretary Christopher will depart for Damascus and Jerusalem next week. Earlier, on 30 January, he will visit the delegations at Wye Plantation.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Congress announced that it has approved the $3 billion in foreign aid to Israel, of which $1.8 billion are earmarked for military needs.

[Rabinovich] Congressional leaders were motivated by a desire to approve the aid to Israel. We are very appreciative of the great measure of goodwill this city and this country are showing us. [end recording]

Israel Submits Compromise Proposal at Wye Talks

TA2801104096 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 28 Jan 96 p 2

[Report by Hayim Shibi in Washington]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] There is a new Israeli compromise proposal: The Syrians will carry out a significant withdrawal of their forces from the border with Israel in return for an Israeli concession on the ground early warning stations on the Golan Heights.

Contrary to previous assessments, both delegations have already held an initial discussion on the early warning stations. According to Israeli sources, "a softening in the Syrian position on the withdrawal of forces is the key, and it will decide the future of the talks within six days."

Intensive American efforts to bridge the gaps between Israel and Syria yesterday focused on the distance to which the Syrian forces will pull back. According to sources in Washington, the question Christopher will try to clarify in his 17th shuttle to the region is: Will al-Asad, within a peace framework, be prepared to move Syrian forces to a distance that will allow Israel at least "two to three days" to call up its forces. Christopher is expected to tour the area between 5 and 9 February.

The Israeli delegation is disappointed. The military talks are stuck in "first gear." The chances of a breakthrough in the spring now appear to be slight. "The Syrians want to make a deal, but it will not be easy," is the joint assessment of several Israeli sources at the Wye Plantation.

The peace team is now trying to achieve an initial Israeli-Syrian agreement on confidence-building measures, such as a "hot line" between senior commanders in the two armies. [passage omitted]

[Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew on 28 January publishes on page 2 a report by Avino'am Bar-Yosef from Washington which says that "at last week's Maryland talks, the head of Syrian operational intelligence stressed Syria's demand for 'equal and balanced' security arrangements. According to the Syrian understanding, the arrangements include demilitarizing and thinning out forces, which is totally contrary to the Israeli position. The Syrians are also demanding the modernization of their army and an answer to what is seen by the Arab side as Israel's nuclear capability."

[Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew on 28 January, in a similar report by 'Aqiva Eldar, Gay Bekhor, Aluf

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Ben, and Eytan Rabin on pages A1 and A2, adds: "Not only do the Syrian officers support a balance of forces between Israel and Syria rather than a relative thinning out of ground forces, but insist that the balance take into account Israel's nuclear advantage and its qualitative advantage in conventional weaponry."]

Role of Moroccan Liaison Offices in Arab-Israeli Peace Process Viewed

LD2701141696 Rabat MAP in English 1311 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Gaza, Jan. 27 (MAP)- The Moroccan liaison offices in Gaza and Tel Aviv, set up more than one year ago, are part of the key role Morocco plays to put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Since their opening in September 1994, the two liaison offices have been conducting actions to make the peace process in the Middle-East progress.

The office in Tel Aviv, which enjoys a semi-official status, undertakes consular, cultural and media activities within the Israeli economic, financial and political milieux to publicize Morocco's investment and development potential and opportunities.

Talal Ghofrani [name as received], head of the office, told MAP envoy that the bureau is also a relay between the various Moroccan and Israeli official instances, particularly the two countries' foreign departments.

For his part, head of the Moroccan liaison office in Gaza, Abdeslam Sinaceur [name as received], stressed that this bureau is meant to consolidate Moroccan-Palestinian relations in all fields. He recalled in this regard Morocco's efforts to defend the rights of the Palestinian people.

Morocco allotted 25 pc [percent] of its external assistance budget to development projects in Gaza, particularly in the field of vocational training and technical assistance.

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Algeria

Algerian Interior Ministry Warns Against Unauthorized Rallies

LD2701173796 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement issued today, the Interior Ministry has indicated that a number of societies have organized or have been trying to organize marches and rallies for various reasons without due respect to the rules of the law in most cases.

Given this situation and its negative repercussions on public order in general, the Ministry of Interior, Local Authorities, and Environment would like to remind the public that the special conditions under which the organization of such forms of public manifestations could be held are stipulated by Law 28/89 and its Amendment 19/91.

As far as the authorization for holding of public assemblies, rallies, and marches is concerned, the Ministry of Interior, Local Authorities and Environment would like to remind organizers that public manifestations need advance authorization. The request for authorization should be forwarded to the governor at least eight days before the date of the manifestation.

It is worth recalling, however, that Article 19 of the above law stipulates that any unauthorized or banned manifestation will be considered as unlawful.

In this respect, the minister of interior, local authorities and environment and the local governor are the only authorities who can ban a public manifestation that they may deem to be detrimental to public order.

The Ministry of Interior, Local Authorities and Environment would like to seize this opportunity to ask organizers to respect the law and avoid the holding of unauthorized public manifestations.

Algeria: Subsidies Removed on Most Staple Foods

LD2701184896 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The minister of commerce has announced that subsidies of staple foods, except milk, officially ended on 3 January.

In an interview published in today's ECH-CHAAB, Abdelkarim Harchaoui said bread is now priced realistically since the official removal of subsidies from all staple foods except milk.

According to Harchaoui, the milk's real price should be 18 dinar per bag [a liter]. He pointed out, however, that milk subsidies will remain in force for the rest of this year and will be removed gradually thereafter.

Algerian HAMAS Activist Killed

LD2701195196 Paris Radio France International in French 1730 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Algeria, Mouloud Bezzaz, a leader of the Islamic Society Movement [HAMAS] and 46 year-old Arabic teacher, was shot dead during the night of 25 to 26 January. This is the first murder of a political activist since the beginning of Ramadan. During the same night, four people had their throats cut by an armed group to the west of Algiers, near Tipasa.

It was also reported that Rabah Kebir, Algerian spokesman for the Islamic Salvation Front in Europe, has just made another appeal for the release of the leaders of his movement. This would be a precondition for negotiations with President Liamine Zeroual.

Algeria: FIS Reiterates Call for Leaders' Release

LD2601230396 Paris Radio France International in French 2130 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Salvation Front has once again asked the Algerian president to free the movement's main officials, Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj, and to then enter into negotiations with them. This was said in a communique received in Paris from the FIS's executive body abroad.

Algerian FIS Supporters in Europe Issue Newsletter

MS2901114596 Southall THE ENLIGHTENMENT in English 22 Jan 96

[Newsletter "publicizing the Islamic Struggle in Algeria," published by Islamic Salvation Front "supporters" in Europe — quotation marks as received; received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Editorial —

The abundant energy for positive change stored in observing Islam!

Praise be to Allah who Says:""O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may (learn) Self-restraint." [Surat Al-Baqarah, 2:183, translation by Yusuf Ali]

The blessed month of Ramadan has come once more with all the beneficial effects it brings on the muslims individually and collectivelly. This month is also an opportunity for the Muslim to feel a sense of belonging to a much larger community called the Ummah, and to meditate on its condition, its march in history and the state of muslims today.

For non-muslim people, fasting the month of Ramadan can be seen as a source of weakness for the muslim

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physical and intellectual outcome. However muslim history has proven that during that blessed month and on many occasions, the muslims have surpassed the strength and might of their opponents who were "rationally" far stronger. The first battle of Islam, the "battle of Badr" is such a case and which took place during the month of Ramadan between the muslim troops and their enemies which were stronger in every "physical aspect". Muslims needs to refer to their glorious past not as a "nostalgia hide out" but as a source of meditation and inspiration for today's situation and problems.

Ramadan is here to show the strength of the "spiritual power" which can overcome many of the situations which may appear "physically deadlocked".

How is the Ummah situation and how its perspectives are looking today? One need to compare the Ummah of 1.2 billion people and one of the largest natural resources reserve on earth, with the like if an objective judgement is to be made. The verdict can not be optimistic even though the Ummah has made progress in the absolute (with respect to itself) nevertheless the gap which separates it from the powerful coalitions of today's world, is increasing almost daily. The Ummah is fragmented, many of its countries are under the iron fist of modern "pharaohs" who see in the teachings of Islam a pure contradiction of their way of "governing" and as such have declared war against Islam in a hypocritical manner. On the economical front, things are not "rosy" either. Despite the fantastic demographic and energetic resources Allah has granted this Ummah with, it has become almost an exclusive "passive actor" in the world economy with the limited role of converting natural resource into food and gadgets for consumption. The economics forecasts are not optimistic neither. It is predicted a more and more "deepening" of financial debt up to a point, which has already been reached by some muslim countries, of being just a "landlord of the resources". The resource will not belong to the Ummah anymore even if there are located in its land. There are exceptions however and which give hope for the economic future of the Ummah. There are those countries such as Malaysia which have reached a situation of an Islamic come back into the way of governing and had the opportunity of being in a part of Asia where "economical miracle" did happen and which deep root for its success was due more to spiritual motivations than to an exclusive "western rationality".

In this sense, Islam as a spiritual force is also able to uplift the Ummah economy much higher than the Shintoism uplifted the economy of the Japanese deprived land. When western experts investigated the Japanese "economical miracle" they had to conclude that the working methodology adopted by the Japanese in terms of quality circles is very efficient and was driven by "cultural factors" which made its transposition to other countries difficult. These "cultural factors" are a direct derivative of the Shintoism and which can for example explain why a Japanese worker won't move when he hears the end-of-work bell and that the western worker will already be in the parking lot ready to go home.

Pharaohs of this Ummah do not want to see the only solution able to extract the Ummah condition from that of "a passive consumer without a right to say in the international arena", to "an active and powerful producer of food, energy, technology and science having a respectable place in the concert of nations". This solution, unfortunately for the tyrant, starts by telling him that he is a tyrant and that he should change as the Ummah has not got enough time to let him indulge in his selfish caprices.

May Allah render this Ummah to Islam, an Islam which has started from a deprived desert land to radiate in every corner of the world. An Islam whose spiritual power has pushed the wheel of the Humanity progress "many rounds ahead". Amine!

Half a million workers in public sectors have not been paid!

500 000 workers from the public sectors have not received their salaries for many months according to Mr Boualem Bouzidi national secretary of the syndical organisation UGTA in charge of the social. The period of non-payment varies from two to twenty three months according to Mr Bouzidi. Given the very substantial increase in prices during Ramadan, one wonders how the workers' families are going to cope in order to survive.

The leadership of national syndicate threatens to stop its collaboration with the military regime!

The leadership of the twenty two millions members syndicate UGTA has threaten to stop its collaboration with the military regime. Since the military coup of January 1992, this powerful syndicate which was put under the dictate of a small group lead by Abdelhak Benhamouda the general secretary of the organisation, has been playing the politics of the regime and neglecting its first duty of defending Jobs and the workers spending power. Mr Benhamouda has agreed to participate in the Junta designated "parliament" by accepting six chairs. It is in this so-called "parliament" that all the laws regarding privatisation has been "discussed and voted for". Mr Benhamouda did not emit any opposition then but now and because of recent Gen. Zeroual political moves, he is threatening to withdraw from that "parliament" on

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the pretext of defending the workers rights. The workers do know however that the remaining life of that "parliament" is very short since the regime has declared its willingness to hold legislative elections. It is time for the Algerian workers to enter a necessary "syndicate pluralism phase" if their rights are to be defended properly and it is too late for Mr Benhamouda and his team to dissociate themselves from the path taken since January 92 and which has lead to the actual economical massacre and to the acute negligence of the workers rights.

Constructing the Gen. Zeroual party with the rest of the FLN!

The FLN [National Liberation Front] political party who has been in the opposition for the first time since the military coup of January 92 and up to now, has had what seems to be an internal "coup d'Etat" which has brought a new general secretary while waiting for its congress due to take place in May 96. Many sees the "regime's hand" behind the internal turmoil of that party in order to dislocate it from the block signatories of the national contract and which has refused to take part in the elections of Gen. Zeroual. Many members of that party are known to be opportunists who hold a big responsibility for the catastrophic state reached by that country up to October 1988. It will not be a surprise if Gen. Zeroual will use them to construct his party and even better still for him to recuperate the whole party as the FLN insignia is still very symbolic in representing the Algerian people armed struggle against the French occupation.

Confidential IMF report shows concern over Algeria's economy

The report shows that last year the Algerian government failed to bring inflation under control. Price increases are reported to have risen to 28 per cent, as in 1994, and currency reserves are reported not to have reached the expected level. Nevertheless, the IMF has reportedly decided to continue its aid to Algeria.

During the two days visit of the IMF chief, Mr Michel Camdessus, the regime media did not stop talking in his name saying that Mr Camdessus was very pleased with the economical performance of the regime ("the miracle" as the Junta prime minister Siffi indecently calls it). Mr Camdessus in fact, did not comment on any economical results but talked about the progression of the reforms (the IMF plan) as satisfactory which in his view will "open important prospect for growth". The common Algeria guy shopping for food during this month of Ramadan will say:"this is a nice hypothetical projection in the future which remains to be seen. Meantime I am now going to the food market with a truck full of money to come back with provisions that fits well in my pockets! Can you do something concrete about it?".

News of Jihad and Mujahedeen — The Islamic Salvation Front; The Islamic Salvation Army, 15 January 1996

Communique

Allah (S.W.T) Says:" O you who believe! If a sinner comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, lest you harm people unwittingly, and afterwards become full of repentance for what you have done." [Koran, Surat Al-Hujurat, 49:6, Translation by Yusuf Ali] Allah also Says:"No knowledge have they of such thing, nor had their fathers. It is a grievous thing that issues from their mouths as a saying. What they say is nothing but falsehood!"[Koran, Surat Al-Kahf, 18:5, Translation by Yusuf Ali].

The enemies of Islam inside and outside Algeria trie as it is in their habits to agitate the "Jihadic" rank and to propagate unfounded rumours within the muslims circles about fictitious divisions within the ranks of the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS). We would like from this hill of Jihad, to reassure the Muslims people everywhere and the muslim Algerian people in particular that the Islamic Salvation Army is unconcerned by such divisions to the contrary of what has been noticed within the Armed Group (GIA). We take note of the combatant unites which has taken their distances from that group in pursuing the Right from what they have seen in terms of disparage and breach of Islamic teachings. We welcome all the Mujahedeen who have already join the Islamic Salvation Army as well as those who are willing to do so. We also restate our love to the FIS leaders at the head of which are Shaykh Abbassi Madani and Shaykh Ali Belhadj and that our thrust in them increases as they are firm in the Right and for what they have been enduring for it. We also restate our trust in our national leadership of the Islamic Salvation Army at the head of which is Shaykh Abu Al Haitham (Madani Mezrak) in accordance with Allah saying:" O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger and those charged with authority among you..."[Koran, Surat An-Nisa,4:59, Translation by Yusuf Ali.] The Commander of Western regions Shaykh Ahmed Benaicha

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Air Algerie Director on Airport Security, French Talks

LD2901083496 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0700 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Air Algerie director general has denied that negotiations on the possible resumption of flights between Algiers and Paris have taken place. Mr. Benchercheli indicated, however, in an interview with the daily L'OPINION that one can expect a solution to this problem following the forthcoming visit of Mrs. Anne-Marie Idrac, the French undersecretary for transport, to Algiers and her talks with Algerian political figures.

As far as security is concerned, the Air Algerie director general pointed out that the standards observed at the airports, particularly at Houari Boumediene, are very high and that the security measures which have been taken are very effective.

According to Mr. Benchercheli, demand for Air Algerie flights has increased since the decision by foreign companies to stop their flights to the country, and he asserted that the company would soon fly 210,000 pilgrims without disturbing its local and international schedules.

Security Forces Kill 8 'Criminals' Near Algiers

LD2701190696 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The security forces wiped out eight criminals who sought shelter in a hiding place at Bainem woods near Algiers last Wednesday [24 January]. A number of weapons, including assault rifles, Kalashinkovs, automatic pistols, hunting rifles, and a radio and homemade bombs were recovered.

The security forces also managed to destroyed a number of hideouts and their contents.

Algerian Security Services Report 39 'Criminals' Killed

LD2701165496 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A statement issued by the security services today said that the security forces killed 39 "criminals" in Oran, Tipaza, Algiers, Blida, Souk Ahras, Bouira, Medea, Oum el-Bouagi and Sidi Bel Abbes.

The statement added that during these operations the security forces recovered a quantity of weapons and ammunition.

Egypt

PA Chairman 'Arafat Arrives in Cairo

NC2701092496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0915 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 27 Jan (MENA)—Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat arrived in Cairo via Rafah today for a visit that will last several days during which he will hold talks with President Husni Mubarak about developments on the Palestinian and Arab scenes.

Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa was on hand to receive 'Arafat on his arrival.

It should be noted that the Palestinian president's visit to Egypt is his first visit abroad after winning the election for the post of Palestinian National Authority [PA] chairman.

Mubarak, 'Arafat Discuss Elections, Peace Talks, Other Developments

NC2701111696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0937 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 27 Jan (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak and Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat began talks at the Presidential Office in Heliopolis today.

They are discussing coordination and consultations, especially after the Palestinian elections; Palestinian developments; and preparations for the final status negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis in May.

The talks were attended on the Egyptian side by Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and on the Palestinian side by PLO Executive Committee member Mahmud 'Abbas, 'Arafat's Political Adviser Hani al-Hasan, 'Arafat's Media Adviser Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, 'Arafat's Economic Adviser Muhammad Rashid, and Palestinian Ambassador in Cairo Zuhdi al-Qidrah.

Foreign Minister Musa Comments on Mubarak-'Arafat Talks

NC2701125796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1225 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 27 Jan (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak and Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat today discussed several issues connected with the Palestinian negotiating track in light of the recent Palestinian elections.

They also assessed the progress of the Palestinian track toward the permanent status negotiations which are

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due to be held in May. They reviewed the various circumstances surrounding the Palestinian issue and the basic principles connected with it.

Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa stated after the meeting between Presidents Mubarak and 'Arafat that the talks also dealt with the general status of Egyptian-Palestinian relationship. He reported that it has been decided to form an Egyptian-Palestinian ministerial committee that will handle cultural, economic, and other ties.

Musa said that they also discussed the general Arab situation and the status of the peace process on all tracks.

Asked how likely it is to establish a Palestinian state in light of the positive developments illustrated by the Palestinian elections despite Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' objections to such a state, 'Amr Musa said that he does not think it is useful to comment on such statements at this time.

He added: Nevertheless I can assert that the establishment of a Palestinian state will ensure that any Palestinian problems will be solved and a comprehensive peace will be prepared. As Arab citizens, we will not consider that a sound and comprehensive peace has been established unless the Palestinian people exercise their right to self-determination and establish a state on Palestinian territory.

Musa said that this is a sound and logical way of looking at things and that abandoning this view would be an act of self-deception. He added that the resulting peace would be incomplete and would adversely affect regional stability.

Asked about the powers of the joint Egyptian-Palestinian ministerial committee, the foreign minister said that it will be chaired by the Egyptian foreign minister and his Palestinian counterpart and will discuss issues in detail. He stressed the need to have relations in the spheres of trade, the economy, investment, tourism, and education, explaining that existing relations in these areas must be reorganized because a new Palestinian state is being born.

'Arafat, Delegation Conclude Egypt Visit, Depart

NC2701204796 Cairo MENA in English 2022 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Jan 27 (MENA)—PLO Chief Yasir 'Arafat left here this evening with his accompanying delegation after a brief visit to Egypt during which he held talks with President Husni Mubarak.

Minister of Health Isma'il Salam was on hand to see him off at the airport.

Mubarak Interviewed by Kuwaiti Paper on Economy, Relations, 'Terrorism'

NC2601204596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1650 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 26 Jan (MENA)—In an interview with Ahmad al-Jarallah, editor in chief of the Kuwait newspaper AL-SIYASAH, President Husni Mubarak emphasized that the first phase of the economic reform process in Egypt has been a gigantic accomplishment by all standards. He said: It is enough for us to note in this respect that this phase witnessed the construction of 14 new cities. Currently there are 23,000 factories in Egypt, while there were not more that 2,000 before the economic openness campaign. [passage omitted]

The following is the text of the interview:

[Al-Jarallah] Mr. President, when did you formulate the recent economic changes in Egypt? Were they thought of on the spur of the moment or were they contemplated for a long time? Many people view them as a revolution in rectifying the economic course.

[Mubarak] Actually we have been contemplating these economic changes for a long time now. The aim was to achieve greater openness and provide more facilities for investment at both the national, Pan-Arab, and worldwide levels.

All this was part of our effort to create more jobs and boost production. These changes were not possible three or four years ago because, by nature, nations cannot bear large changes all at once. There are always cynics who go to extremes without any understanding and interpret these changes as selling out Egypt.

Therefore, gradualness was necessary in any contemplated economic change. Indeed, we began the first phases of this change some years ago. The most difficult stage was when we fixed exchange rates, reduced subsidies on goods, and cut the exemptions granted for investment and privatization. Even though we have implemented all these changes gradually, a large number of shrill voices were heard, especially when we began privatization because for many years people have been accustomed to the state running such projects. However, it was impossible to continue this situation because companies were losing money and the state was losing by compensating them through tax breaks. Taxes are supposed to be used for public services, such as health, education, public utilities, and other things. Had that situation persisted, a time would definitely have come

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when all tax revenues plus the Suez Canal revenues would have been consumed by subsidies and unprofitable companies.

So it was necessary for us to begin privatization; but even that process began gradually. You may have noticed the many difficulties we faced when we began the privatization. We met the same difficulties when we initiated an open investment policy. As I have mentioned, nations do not tolerate taking large doses of medicine all at once. Taking these doses is very difficult.

When we actually began the privatization phase, people realized this as they began feeling its impact. There were numerous shrill voices stressing that there would be more unemployment, but exactly the opposite happened. Take the Pepsi Cola Company for example: After it was privatized, workers' wages went up, not down. The same thing happened with the hotels when their privatization began. I think we all sensed the difference, which is logical, because no matter how much effort it puts in, the government cannot perform the role played by the private sector in this regard.

The private sector has the ability to act and use the market, while the flexibility of the government companies is limited. More workers are employed under privatization even though there were people who feared that workers employed in projects might be laid off due to automation. Most hotels were turned over to the private sector and their performance improved. This resulted in an improvement in the tourism sector's performance.

[Al-Jarallah] Mr. President, I would like to ask you about the results of the first economic phase, apart from fixing the pound's rate and privatization.

[Mubarak] The infrastructure was completed; hundreds of billions of pounds were spent on it during the economic openness stage. The infrastructure in Egypt has been renovated completely, and thus Egypt has been saved from a collapse of all utilities without exception. You realize that without an infrastructure, there can be no progress, which is the foundation for any structure, development, or service in any sphere.

There were impediments facing investors during the initial phase, so we removed them. We began by removing obstacles to projects worth five million pounds or less, so that they could be implemented without approval. Later we raised the limit to 10 million pounds and then to 50 million pounds. Later we sanctioned unlimited investments; in other words these huge projects are being implemented without lengthy legal procedures. If this country needs such projects why should there be administrative obstacles to them? These facilities must be unfettered. This is in addition to the tax exemptions offered to investment projects.

The same thing happened with investments in Upper Egypt. I demanded that land be given to every investor who builds a project and begins production. So our policy was to open up new horizons for employment, create job opportunities, and boost production.

What the first phase of the economic reform experienced is a giant accomplishment by all measures. It is enough for us to note in this respect that this phase witnessed the construction of 14 new cities. Currently there are 23,000 factories in Egypt, while there were no more than 2,000 before the economic openness period.

[Al-Jarallah] Some say that these measures have come belatedly.

[Mubarak] Some observers says this. But I could not start these measures earlier for fear they would fail. These measures could have met stiff resistance from some doubters. Investors could have fallen into the clutches of bureaucrats who had the power to give permits and licenses. Therefore, it would have been wrong to start prematurely. It was necessary to deal with these matters properly and gradually. This method suits the nature of our people. The climate has been prepared, our people have come to understand the goals, and officials in various positions have become confident in the new policies and changes. I am always confident of the people's ability to achieve their goals.

[Al-Jarallah] Mr. President, even though Egypt has started the process of privatization, several major projects have not been privatized. Does this mean that Egypt is still hesitant about this policy?

[Mubarak] Perhaps this was true at the beginning when we were convincing the people to accept privatization. But the picture has now completely changed. More than 50 projects are now for sale to the private sector. At the beginning there was fear of the privatization policy. People imagined that this meant that machines would replace workers. There were many other erroneous misconceptions. But after the experiment had gone on for a little while, after the people had begun feeling that the experiment was a success, after the workers' wages rose and more workers were employed, we gained confidence and began to expand this experiment. Our policy was to use some of the proceeds from the sale of these projects to repay their debts to banks. The rest was used to reinvest in new projects. Later these projects were either sold, or the state and the private sector managed them jointly, or other methods were used to stimulate these projects.

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[Al-Jarallah] What about public utilities, such as electricity, water, and telephones? Is the state thinking of privatizing them?

[Mubarak] This will take place at a later stage. Nevertheless, we have started doing this. Regarding electricity and water, the opportunity is now open for investors to build electricity power and water pumping stations and to sell electricity and water to the citizens. Investors have built water supply stations in al-Ghardaqah, Sharm al-Shaykh, and other tourist areas. Our aim is to provide further services, get rid of red tape, and ease the burden on the budget. This will enable the state to focus its efforts on citizens in the low-income bracket and to provide them with basic needs.

[Al-Jarallah] Mr. President, in your estimation, will investors feel the effects of the recent economic decisions soon or will they need a long time to be assured that these results are effective?

[Mubarak] No reassurance is needed. Steps have been taken and the investors have received certain benefits. There are instructions to all governors to remove any obstacles facing investors.

[Al-Jarallah] Mr. President, to what extent can these recent economic measures affect the overall revenue of the Treasury?

[Mubarak] I do not think they will affect revenue. All the results of these decisions were accurately calculated. They were studied by Prime Minister Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri, by the planning minister, and by the finance minister. Tax revenue is unimportant compared with projects that employ a large number of workers. These projects are more important than the taxes collected by the state. We are increasing trust between financiers and the Tax Department. This confidence could lead to the collection of more taxes. I believe that employing thousands of workers and opening up means of livelihood for the people are better than any taxes. In the same spirit, I have signed decrees reducing customs duties. Duties on some commodities have been reduced from 70 percent to 10 percent. This reduction will increase earnings, not the opposite. We have exempted several production projects from taxes for up to 10 years. This in itself is an incentive for more investment that will absorb the increasing numbers of workers and create livelihoods for these citizens. Investors will thus have more confidence in the economic climate instead of scheming to evade taxes. Investors will use their talents to expand the production projects.

[Al-Jarallah] Mr. President. This is a comforting situation for businessmen and investors.

[Mubarak] Our outlook is comprehensive. It is not confined to the investors but also includes the workers. We want Egyptian investors to increase their investments in Egypt under these new measures so that the workers will benefit. We want to protect these workers and provide them with work. I want to put the people first. If we were all rich, the social fabric would change. If we were all poor, we would fight harder over the loaf of broad and the standard of living would fall. A rich society imports labor and society loses its affiliation and identity. Therefore, a budget is necessary so that everyone, be they investors, workers, rich, or poor, will benefit from the available opportunities. This will lead to a just society.

[Al-Jarallah] What is the reasoning behind choosing Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri as prime minister to replace Dr. 'Atif Sidqi?

[Mubarak] First of all I would like to praise Dr. Sidqi, who assumed responsibility during the most difficult stage of economic reform, a stage that needed someone to study in detail every step related to it. The truth is that all the studies made by Dr. Sidqi's government were thorough and sound and were the result of the cooperation of all agencies. His former position as head of the Central Auditing Agency helped him in this regard. Dr. Sidqi worked tremendously hard during the years he was in charge of the government, for which he deserves much appreciation. He managed to get us through the most difficult stages of our modern history—namely, the start of the economic reform—and he performed his duty with the utmost efficiency and accuracy.

Since we are at the doorstep of a second and new stage of Egyptian national action and an advanced stage of economic reform—one of achieving a major renaissance by taking advantage of all of society's resources and accomplishments and attaining major aspirations and hopes—it was necessary to choose Dr. al-Janzuri for his expertise and efficiency. I chose him to give a strong and vital impetus in the coming stage. He is one of the officials who participated effectively in the previous stage. He was charge of planning during three five-year plans, and knows much about what has been done and what we are about to go through.

[Al-Jarallah] Some say that the recent ministerial change was limited. They explain this by saying that you personally do not favor big changes.

[Mubarak] It is not a question of whether I prefer change or not. I do not believe in change just for the sake of change. Change must be for a reason. Is the change supposed to be in name only? Is it reasonable to bring in new ministers to block the old plans? Is it sensible

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to bring in ministers who spend six or seven months in preparing a plan only to be relieved just as they start implementing it? Approximately 240 ministers were changed in a period of not more than 16 years. The result was a state of instability that was the main reason for what we suffered for many years thereafter. That is why I say that change for the sake of change will not enable us to progress a single step. Any progress requires us to draw up a plan for debate by the parliament, and that gives ministers the chance to carry it out. I know from long experience that any new minister normally starts his work by making plans that contradict the plans of his predecessor and bringing in new aides who reject the plans made by the aides of the former minister. Thus, they waste a lot of time in making new plans. As soon as they start implementing the plans, the government is reshuffled again. This is why not a single plan was fully implemented in the past. For the first time in our history we managed to complete two five-year plans, and now we are carrying out the third five-year plan.

[Al-Jarallah] You say that the economic measures announced recently had been contemplated previously, while some say that their announcement is timed in order to promote the new government. Are these just mere ideas or are they backed by executive plans?

[Mubarak] Some people like to make interpret things like this. However, the recent economic decisions and the ministerial changes are part of continuous activity. These decisions were not thought of on the spur of the moment. The planning started before that and it was known in advance that we would be heading in this direction. Although some believed that these decisions would reduce the state's tax and other revenues, this did not prevent Dr. al-Janzuri's government from making these decisions after a careful study. We have to remember that Dr. al-Janzuri was planning minister in the previous government and has enough experience in these things. In addition, the People's Assembly is monitoring the implementation.

[Al-Jarallah] You mean to say that the implementation of the new economic decisions has already started?

[Mubarak] The implementation of some decisions has already started. Today I signed draft laws that will be discussed by the People's Assembly next week. For instance, measures related to boosting investment and giving more facilities and benefits to investors have already been initiated because they do not require laws. Likewise, part of the taxes collected from Egyptians working abroad is being refunded and the rest will be repaid within two to three years. In this regard, I would like to emphasize two points regarding this tax. First: The state respects judicial verdicts. Second: What I care about more than anything is the citizen's confidence in his country.

[Al-Jarallah] Allow me to ask a question that is on the minds of many people within and outside Egypt. Did the former prime minister resign or was he fired?

[Mubarak] Nobody in Egypt is fired unless he makes a vital mistake affecting the people's interests. As for resignation, it results from one's feeling that he has done his duty and should make room for a new era. Dr. 'Atif Sidqi worked under tough circumstances that required him, as I said earlier, to exert tremendous efforts. For humanitarian considerations, it was not possible for us to have him to continue work so hard despite his health, particularly as the new stage requires more work. It was essential to honor this man by appointing him head of the Specialized National Council, a senior position related to public work, where he succeeds Dr. 'Abd-al-Qadir Hatim, who also exerted great efforts in that position and conducted valuable studies in various fields. Normally, when a prime minister resigns he leaves government for good. But because we did not want to lose the expertise of this man, we tasked him with another responsibility which, although less exhausting, is a major assignment.

[Al-Jarallah] Mr. President, how do you assess Egyptian-Arab relations in general, and the Egyptian-Saudi relations in particular?

[Mubarak] Egypt's relations with its Arab sisters are at their best. Egyptian-Saudi relations must remain good and strong. I personally have excellent relations with the custodian of the two holy mosques [King Fahd]. Also, the Egyptian and Saudi peoples are bound by strong ties that cannot be affected or harmed by certain individual excessiveness.

[Al-Jarallah] Mr. President, do you think that terrorism has diminished in Egypt?

[Mubarak] Terrorism has become a global phenomenon. All countries must cooperate in combating the shedding of the blood of innocent people. There is terrorism in Egypt, in Algeria, Tunisia, France, and the United States. Terrorism also exists in Britain, which has become an gathering spot for terrorists. I believe that Britain will suffer from the terrorists when they start revolting against some decision or when they try to terrorize the decision makers. The price will then be very expensive.

Generally speaking, terrorism is everywhere. And unless the countries of the world cooperate to fight this phenomenon, the world will pay the price for this terrorism. However, we in Egypt have efficient security services that monitor every terrorist move, and at the

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same time this service monitors the terrorism sent to us from abroad. It is extremely strange that terrorists and killers enjoy political asylum. Terrorism has diminished in Egypt. It is being rejected by the people. The remnants of terrorism will collapse.

[Al-Jarallah] Mr. President, how are your relations with your neighbor Sudan?

[Mubarak] We implore God to guide this regime. I believe that this regime is the cause of all the Sudanese people's ordeals. I do not want to mention names. But the fraternal Sudanese people are helpless because of this regime, which harbors terrorists. We know all the details. We know the locations of the terrorists and when and where the terrorists groups are stationed. We survey all this. We have information about all these terrorists, their training, and how they are armed. Everything is clear to us. It is like we are reading a book or watching television.

[Al-Jarallah] Mr. President, amid the present atmosphere of economic openness in Egypt and the political openness that Egypt has experienced and initiated, who is benefiting economically? Is it Egypt or Israel? The answer to this question is important in the current circumstances.

[Mubarak] Some people overestimate Israel. They believe that Israel is an economic ghoul. This is not true. We have had relations with Israel since we signed the peace treaty. This has not affected our economy. We must not be economically afraid of Israel. We number 60 million while Israel has five million people, so you can imagine the economic balance in this open-door policy and who will benefit out of all this. Israel also gets aid, like we do. If Israel's economy is good or if the per capita income is higher than ours, it is because they are only five million strong. I believe that there is a big difference between the economy of a state with a population of five million and that of a country with a population of 60 million. Some people in the Arab world think that they are incapable of coexisting with the Israel's economic even though it is limited in comparison to the collective Arab capabilities. We know the figures, and I believe that economic progress is not being monopolized by anyone, because the door is wide open for every state and people to forge ahead in all fields. Progress can be achieved through strong will and determination. This is our way.

[Al-Jarallah] Mr. President, how do you assess the acts of sabotage that occurred in Bahrain recently?

[Mubarak] I am sorry that such acts occurred in fraternal Bahrain. This is not in the nature of the Gulf people. Rather it shows foreign interference in Bahrain's domestic affairs. Actually, what is taking place in Bahrain is not aimed solely at Bahrain; it is targeted against all the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. the Egyptian people and leadership denounce this interference in Bahrain's domestic affairs. Bahrain has achieved prosperity and a stabile standard of living and economic progress at a time when bad economic conditions prevail around the world. I am confident that the Government of Bahrain can wipe out this sedition. I will continue to call for the good neighborliness and for noninterference in the other countries' domestic affairs. We must abide by and defend these principles and values.

Egyptian Foreign Ministry Statement Demands Bosnian War Crime Trials

NC2801123196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1205 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 28 Jan (MENA)—Egypt has stated that it is following with great interest the news about the discovery of mass graves of Muslim victims resulting from a war of extermination in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

A statement by the Egyptian Foreign Ministry today declared that Egypt had condemned such crimes on former occasions and that, in its consultations with the international and Islamic contact groups, Egypt had demanded that trying war criminals in the former Yugoslavia be made a basic condition of any peace agreement reached by the concerned parties.

The Foreign Ministry statement adds: Egypt also proclaimed its willingness to give every possible assistance to the court that will try war criminals in the former Yugoslavia. Recently Egypt participated in a meeting organized by the relief aid mobilization team of the Organization of the Islamic Conference that was devoted to discussing ways of extending legal assistance to the Bosnian Government in any cases coming before such a court.

The Foreign Ministry statement says a delegation chaired by the Bosnian justice minister will visit Egypt in February to discuss this issue.

Eritrean Envoy Gives Musa Message on Yemeni 'Escalation'

NC2701150596 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Muhammad 'Ali 'Amr, Eritrean ambassador in Cairo, today stated that he handed a message from Eritrean Foreign Minister Petros Solomon to Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa during his meeting today with Ambassador Marwan Badr, assistant foreign minister for African affairs.

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The Eritrean ambassador added that the message deals with what he described as Yemen's recent escalation in the dispute between Eritrea and Yemen over al-Hanish al-Kabir island. Some Yemeni planes overflew the positions of the Eritrean troops on the island on Wednesday [24 January] evening, he added, noting that his country considers this action an unnecessary escalation, particularly at the present time, when Egyptian, Ethiopian, and French parties are trying to find a peaceful solution to this dispute.

Muslim Brotherhood Urges Rejection of Treaties With Israel

LD2801162096 Tehran IRNA in English
1524 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Athens, Jan. 28, IRNA — The new supreme guide of the Muslim Brotherhood (al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin) in Egypt, Mustafa Mashur, Sunday [28 January] called on the Muslim world not to accept the occupation of Palestine and al-Quds [Jerusalem] by the Zionists but to continue their struggle.

"Muslim must reject this occupation and not recognize the Zionist enemy's occupation of Palestine and the al-Aqsa mosque... These treaties which are being signed by some (Arab) countries with the Zionist enemy is a capitulation, and not peace," Mashur told IRNA in a telephone interview from Cairo.

"This enemy holds great hostility against the believers, therefore we must continue struggling (jihad) and opposing till Allah decides between the truth and falsehood," he said. Mashur, 74, was chosen by consensus as the fifth supreme guide of the banned Muslim Brotherhood last week following the death of Hamid Abu al-Nasr at the age of 83 on January 20.

Cairo Islamic paper AL-SHA'B reported that thousands of people gave their baiyya (allegiance) in public to Mashur following Abu al-Nasr's funeral. Mashur, who has a science degree, was a member of the Ikhwan's military wing that fought the British occupation forces in Egypt in the 1940s. He had been running the brotherhood's affairs for the past year and a half, while Abu al-Nasr was lying ill. Mashur spent three years in prison under ex-King Faruk, and under the former President 'Abd al-Nasir he was imprisoned twice, the first time for ten years and the second for six, for his struggles for the cause of Islam.

Egypt: Gunmen Open Fire on Train in al-Minya

NC2601131096 Cairo MENA in English
1245 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Jan 26 (MENA)—Unidentified attackers today opened fire at a train on a trip from Aswan to Cairo in Abu Qurqas, al-Minya, Upper Egypt.

An Interior Ministry security source said one citizen was injured in the attack, during which the train's security force opened fire at the gunmen who have managed to flee.

Security leaderships of al-Minya rushed to the scene of the attack, while investigations began into the incident.

Paper Advocates Easier Terms for Iraq in Oil-for-Food Offer

NC2701093196 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0705 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 27 Jan (MENA)—The newspaper AL-AHRAM calls for intensifying efforts to ease the conditions contained in UN Security Council Resolution 986 that allows Iraq to sell part of its oil to buy food and medicines for the Iraqi people.

In its editorial today, the paper says that regardless of its opinion of the ruling regime in Baghdad, it urges greater efforts to rescue the Iraqi people from famine, malnutrition, and the epidemics that have started to spread among the Iraqis as a result of the international embargo.

AL-AHRAM underlines the importance of the negotiations that the United Nations is holding with the Iraqi Government to persuade it to accept Resolution 986, which permits Iraq to sell $4 million worth of oil every six months on the condition that the revenue is used to buy food and medicines under UN supervision.

Egyptian Paper Comments on Prospective U.S.-Israeli Defense Pact

NC2801065996 Cairo MENA in Arabic
2210 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 27 Jan (MENA)—AL-AHRAM says that the security and military cooperation between the United States and Israel has become one of the most important factors in the region, a fact that has come to be "taken for granted" and well-established over the past decades.

In its Sunday [28 January] issue, the paper says that cooperation between those two countries is based on several complicated principles connected with mutual

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interests, ties, and pressures that emerged during the 1950's, increased during the 1960's, and have grown since the early 1980's.

These ties have begun to take developed forms through qualitative changes. This is apparent in the strategic cooperation agreement between the two countries, embodying close relations in all technological domains and leaving almost no area where there is not an understanding and cooperation arrangement. It is being proposed these days to raise the level of this cooperation through the establishment of a U.S.-Israeli defense alliance.

AL-AHRAM says that no one knows exactly what such an alliance could signify. Perhaps the reports being published about it are exaggerated, as U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau said. However, the question is not one of the extent of current activities, but their suitability. This is rather an old way of thinking. Perhaps it is not logical to talk of new "defense alliances" in the context of peace and peace preparations.

Libya

Libyan Media Claims Mosad Agent Implicates CIA in Lockerbie Crash

LD2601173796 Tripoli JANA in English 1443 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman A'ina al-Nar [February] 26, JAMAHARIYAH NEWS AGENCY — A former agent in the Israeli intelligence agency, Mosad, has confirmed the involvement of the CIA in the incident of bombing the American airliner Pan Am over Lockerbie in 1988.

The Israeli Mosad agent Uval Aviv indicated that a clandestine unit of the American intelligence agency is responsible for bombing the Pan Am airliner. He said that he has documents which he collected over three years through officials of the American security agencies, proving that this clandestine unit which was called Courrier was engaged for about 12 months prior to the incident in several operations of drug trafficking to America with the aim of using the revenue to finance illegal activities in Latin America and the Middle East.

The agent added in his statement, which was published by the Israeli newspaper HA'AERTZ that within the pattern of this operation, the American intelligence agencies, asked its agents to exchange one of the suitcases of the drugs with the suitcase carrying the bomb, which caused the explosion and the crash of the airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988.

Libyan Editor Views NEW YORK POST Report on Lockerbie

LD2801112296 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 0900 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] New York, 28 Jan — The NEW YORK POST reported a statement made recently by New York's attorney general who said that he would have new information on the bombing of the U.S. Pan Am plane over Lockerbie in Scotland in 1988 after gathering a lot of information on what he called international terrorism.

The international affairs' editor at the Libyan news agency, JANA, commented on the statement by saying:

From time to time, the media discloses new evidence and facts on the so-called Lockerbie issue, which constantly reveals and confirms that all previous allegations regarding the responsibility of the two Libyan suspects were groundless fabrications and lies for which the Libyan people have paid a price through the unjust measures imposed on it.

The editors stressed that the statement of the New York attorney general reported by the above-mentioned U.S. newspaper and all previous evidence acquitting the two suspects of the charges brought against them regarding the downing of the Pan Am plane should form a true international awareness urging the world's countries to lift the unjust measures imposed on the Great Jamahiriyah by the Western countries and to consider them void and contravening all international laws and conventions.

The international affairs editor of the Libyan news agency concluded his comment by saying that the greater Jamahiriyah made positive initiatives throughout the previous years to solve this case. This was in order to reach the truth adopted by several international organizations, while Western countries refused to answer these initiatives and resumed their usual rigidity, which confirmed that they [Western countries] did not want to reach a just solution for this case.

We confirm to the world our just stance and we trust the world countries that support truth and justice with the responsibility of making a quick move to lift the injustice and the false accusations. We call on them to safeguard the law and international conventions from slant and counterfeit. This will safeguard the world countries from the tyranny of force and terrorism in the future.

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Libyan Commentary: Arabs Have Right To Possess Nuclear Weapons

LD2701092896 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 0700 GMT 27 Jan 96

[Commentary by JANA "political affairs editor"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tripoli, 27 Jan — The terrorist Benyamin Netanyahu, leader of the Israeli Likud Party, declared two days ago that the Israeli enemy would not relinquish its nuclear capabilities even if what he called peace were to be achieved with Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. In a statement to the radio of the Israeli enemy, he said: If Libya, Syria, Iran, and Iraq are prepared to sign, what he called, a peace treaty in return for us giving up our own non-conventional, nuclear, chemical, and bacteriological capabilities, we will reject the signing of such a treaty.

The political affairs editor of the Libyan news agency, JANA, commented on this and said that the statements made by the terrorist Netanyahu, leader of what is known as the Likud Party, and the statements made earlier by the terrorist Peres, prime minister and war minister of the Israeli enemy, in which he announced that the Israelis would not give up the possession and development of their nuclear capabilities, were an insult and a challenge to the international community which has signed the treaty for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and introduced procedures for monitoring its implementation.

The editor added that the Israeli enemy's boasting that it possessed atomic weapons and weapons of mass destruction and that it was developing its long-range ballistic missiles confirmed the military and hostile nature of the Israeli enemy which, he said, contradicted its alleged desire for the so-called peace.

The editor further said that this Israeli boasting reflected an Israeli strategy aimed at dominating the Arab region through the possession and stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction, including atomic, bacteriological, chemical, and other weapons. He added that this boasting also exposed the falseness and the pretensions of the so-called peace in the name of which some Arab sides were rushing to sign their checks of concessions [as received] to the Israelis.

This also confirmed, the editor said, the desire of the Israelis to force the Arabs to capitulate thanks to their atomic superiority.

The editor concluded his commentary by warning of the danger of the enemy's possession of weapons of mass destruction and said that the Arabs who were threatened by the Israeli atomic weapons had the right to try in any way possible to possess these weapons so that a balance is achieved in the force required in the region and so that the region is not left at the mercy of the Israelis.

Sudan

Sudanese Government Says Ethiopia Refuses Cooperation

EA2601125596 Khartoum SUNA in English 1014 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Khartoum, Jan 26 (SUNA)— The Foreign Ministry issued Thursday [25 January] a statement in condemnation of the ongoing attempts by circles hostile to Sudan to utilize the Security Council as a tool for issuing unjust condemnation of Sudan regarding the Ethiopian complaint on alleged role of Sudan in the assassination attempt on life of the Ethiopian President Husni Mubarak.

The Foreign Ministry also affirmed Sudan's rejection to [as received] all forms of terrorism, pointing out that Sudan dealt with the case seriously in spite of the deceptive and few information provided by Ethiopia.

The statement explained that Sudan has formed investigation committees formed in the Ethiopian allegations under chairmanship of the prosecutor general, adding that the outcome of these investigation has been communicated to the Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi through a message delivered by the minister at the presidency of the Republic. [sentence as received]

The message communicated to the Ethiopian president affirmed Sudan's readiness [to] cooperate with Ethiopia toward pursuing the suspected persons and receiving an Ethiopian security team, the statement said.

According to the statement Ethiopia refused to cooperate with Sudan and tended to transfer the issue from the bilateral framework to a regional one represented in the African mechanism for solving conflicts utilizing its chairmanship of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and in flagrant violation of the regulations and procedure which govern [the] work of the African mechanism.

Sudanese Foreign Ministry Statement Rejects UNSC Condemnation

EA2701152996 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Foreign Ministry has issued a statement on ongoing attempts by the UN Security Council [UNSC] to pass a resolution condemning Sudan.

In the statement, Sudan affirms its rejection of these attempts, which are connected with Ethiopia's complaint

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over Sudan's imaginary role in the assassination attempt against the head of the Egyptian regime. The statement reiterates Sudan's complete rejection of exploiting the Security Council to achieve political objectives by circles opposed to Sudan. It also reiterates Sudan's firm rejection of all forms of terrorism, pointing out that Sudan has seriously dealt with this issue, despite the scanty and misleading information it has received from Ethiopia. The statement says that investigation committees have been formed under the chairmanship of the attorney general, and the findings of these investigations have been passed to the Ethiopian president. [passage omitted]

In affirming Sudan's desire to confine the matter to African parameters, the statement points out that Sudan has received an OAU delegation, led by the deputy secretary general, who praised Sudan's cooperation, and recommended a continuation of dialogue in a report he presented to an OAU meeting last December.

The statement says the foreign minister has sent a letter to the OAU secretary general, inviting him to visit Sudan for talks on the best ways of implementing the organization's resolutions, and to investigate Egypt's and Ethiopia's claims against Sudan.

Regarding the intransigence which has become a constant characteristic of the Ethiopian regime, the Foreign Ministry statement describes Ethiopia resorting to the Security Council as a violation of the OAU resolutions. This can only interpreted as a feverish campaign, spearheaded by Ethiopia and Egypt, to make the Security Council condemn Sudan.

The statement makes it clear that dragging the Security Council into this issue reflects premeditated intentions in cooperating and coordinating with the forces of hegemony and superiority.

The Foreign Ministry statement reiterates that Sudan is fully prepared to cooperate with the OAU on this matter.

Sudan: Government Troops Massed for 'Large Scale' Attack

NC2701200696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1915 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Nairobi, 27 Jan (MENA)—Bajan Amum, secretary of information and culture in the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement [SPLM] [name and title as received], has stated that Sudanese Government troops are currently massed in Juba and Malakal in preparation for a large scale attack on the movement's position in the eastern equatorial province.

Amum told MENA this evening that the movement's forces are fully prepared to check this anticipated attack, which is expected to involve 40,000 soldiers. He noted that the attack will coincide with the beginning of drought season in southern Sudan.

Amum pointed out that the government troops used the new helicopters recently obtained from Iran in the recent (Ashwa) battle.

He said that the government in Khartoum obtained 24 M-11 helicopters from Iran. The latter had obtained the helicopters from Ukraine.

Sudanese Group Urges Release of Political, Other Detainees

NC2701192196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1840 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 27 Jan (MENA)—A Sudanese group concerned with torture victims has appealed to governments, regional and world organizations, and centers working for human rights to pressure the al-Bashir-al-Turabi government to release all political and trade union detainees from Sudanese jails.

A statement issued by the group in Cairo today said that the Sudanese security authorities launched a new arrest campaign on Monday, 15 January.

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Yemen

Yemeni Tribesmen Kidnap 18 French Tourists

NC2601220596 Paris AFP in English
2043 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Jan 26 (AFP)—Tribesmen have kidnapped 18 French tourists in northeast Yemen in a bid to win the release of a jailed member of their tribe, a Yemeni official said Friday [26 January].

'Abd-al-Wali al-Shamiri, governor of the Ma'rib province, 180 kilometres (110 miles) east of Sanaa, said all 18 seized Thursday were in good health and talks were going on to win their release.

He said the tribesmen were members of the Al-Aslam tribe and had taken the tourists to the village of 'Ayn, in the Shabwa province, about 300 kilometres (180 miles) southeast of Sanaa.

"Tribal leaders who are leading the mediation have seen the tourists walking in the village orange groves and they are all in good health."

Yemeni security forces were preparing Friday to surround the area in a bid to pressure the kidnappers into giving up their hostages.

They were seized Thursday when four men from the tribe stopped two buses from a Yemeni travel agency returning to Sanaa after a trip to Ma'rib to visit ancient ruins.

"The kidnappers forced the drivers of the bus to get out and drove the two vehicles themselves towards the Shabwa area," he added.

He said they wanted to win the release of one of their tribesmen jailed three months ago by a Yemeni court for kidnapping an American last summer, who was later freed.

The report came after the French foreign ministry said 16 French tourists had been abducted in Yemen.

They were kidnapped Thursday by "uncontrolled elements," a ministry spokesman said without saying whether the kidnappers had made any demands, but adding they were "in good health and should be freed quickly."

The France embassy in the capital Sanaa on Friday contacted local authorities who have spoken to the kidnappers, the spokesman said.

More than 20 foreigners have been taken hostage by different Yemeni tribes over the past three years as a way of putting pressure on the government to meet various demands.

In early 1994 three French nationals were seized by armed members of the Ahnum tribe, who wanted to stop a road being built. They were released three weeks later. All the hostages have been released safe and unharmed.

Yemeni Police, Army Action Said Considered To End Kidnapping

NC2701090396 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0833 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sanaa, 27 Jan (MENA)—MENA has learned that a military campaign by the Yemeni security forces and the Army are being considered to rescue 18 French tourists who were kidnapped yesterday.

The abduction was carried out by four Yemeni tribesmen from the Shabwah area. They are demanding that the Yemeni authorities release a detained tribesman who carried out a similar kidnapping four months ago. At that time he demanded that the government carry out projects it had promised to implement in the province.

Sources close to the Yemeni Government have stated that it is likely that other tribesmen will invoke tribal traditions to try to persuade the kidnappers to end the abduction of the French tourists.

Yemeni Tribesmen Release 1 French Hostage

NC2701135296 Paris AFP in English
1334 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Jan 27 (AFP) — Yemeni tribesmen on Saturday [27 January] released one of the 17 French tourists held hostage since Thursday in eastern Yemen, a governor of the province said.

Yemeni Army Surrounds Tribesmen Holding 17 French Hostages

NC2701104696 Paris AFP in English
1002 GMT 27 Jan 96

[Report by Hammoud Mounassar]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Jan 27 (AFP) — Yemeni security services armed with automatic machine-guns on Saturday [27 January] surrounded kidnappers holding 17 French tourists hostage and arrested several members of the tribe, the army said.

The army sealed off the area throwing up roadblocks around Shabwa, 300 kilometres (180 miles) southeast of Sanaa, where the tourists have been held since Thursday.

"The army intends to pressure the Al-Aslam (tribe) into freeing the French tourists," a spokesman said, without saying how many tribesmen had been arrested so far.

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But he said the army was confident the French hostages would not be harmed following the arrests, "because the tribe wants to resolve one problem and not create another."

Members of the Al-Aslam tribe ambushed two busloads of French tourists on Thursday as they returned to Sanaa from a sight-seeing trip to ancient ruins in Ma'rib, 180 kilometres (110 miles) east of Sanaa, the governor of Ma'rib province 'Abd-al-Wali al-Shamiri said.

Four members of the tribe forced the drivers out of the buses and then drove themselves to Shabwa, he said.

They aimed to use the hostages as bargaining chips to win the release of one of their members jailed three months ago for kidnapping an American last summer in a dispute over money.

Shamiri said tribal leaders were negotiating to try to free the 17 tourists who were all in good health.

An 18th member of the group, Simone Vuccino, told Radio France- International from her hotel in Sanaa Friday that she had been assured by the French embassy in the Yemeni capital that her fellow travellers would be released on Saturday.

"The ambassador told me that the French tourists were going to be released on Saturday. They are being held by kidnappers who have made demands that have not been met.

"They are also holding passengers from three coaches, three heavy goods vehicles and four cars," she said, in a broadcast monitored in Paris.

Vuccino did not join the rest of her group on Thursday for the trip because she was too tired. But when they did not return in time to catch a flight back to Paris early Friday she became worried.

"When I couldn't reach the Yemeni agent of our travel agency, I rang the French ambassador who told me straight away that he knew what was happening and that the group had been taken hostage.

"Late Friday I finally got hold of the Yemeni travel agent who told me he had been to Maarib and seen my travelling companions and that they would be freed today, Saturday.

"I know from press reports that Ma'rib is a dangerous area and I am very worried to know that they are there, because it is very cold in the mornings in Sanaa and I wonder whether they have enough clothing."

The Yemeni government issued a statement late Friday denouncing the kidnappers as "a gang of saboteurs" and pledging that security forces would take "the necessary measures" to arrest the abductors and free the tourists.

Yemeni Authorities Pressure Kidnappers With Arrests

LD2701130696 Paris France-Inter Radio Network in French 1000 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Yemeni authorities have just announced the arrest of several members of the tribe that has been detaining a group of 17 French tourists for the past 48 hours. The arrests took place 300 km southeast of San'a, the capital, in the area where the hostages are being held. The army hopes that this measure will put pressure on the al-Aslam tribe and lead them to free the French tourists.

The Yemeni military authorities do not believe that the hostages will be put to death in response to the arrests, since the tribe wishes to solve a problem and not create a new one, a member of the security services declared. The tribe is demanding that the authorities free one of its tribesmen who is awaiting trial for a previous kidnapping of an American oil company employee.

Yemeni Interior Minister: Forces Besieging Kidnappers' Villages

JN2801063796 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0600 GMT 28 Jan 96

[Report by Faysal Mukarram in Sanaa]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yemeni security and Army units are besieging the al-Jarf and al-Daymah villages of the Al Yathrum tribe in Wadi Harib between the Ma'rib and Shabwah Governorates, where 17 French tourists were kidnapped by a gang while they were visiting the historical Ma'rib Dam on 25 January. The captors released one of 18 hostages, possibly to communicate their conditions for the release of the rest of hostages.

Yemeni Interior Minister Colonel Husayn 'Arab said the gang is led by 'Abdallah Dawman, who is demanding the release of his brother, Zabnallah Dawman, who was arrested several months ago in connection with the kidnapping of an American citizen. The Yemeni minister considered the release of one of the hostages a positive development and expressed hope the rest will be released within the next 48 hours. He stressed that the hostages are in good health and unharmed and said the deputy interior minister and Ma'rib governor, along with the consul from the French Embassy in Sanaa, are near the place where the hostages are being held.

The Yemeni minister added that the security and Army forces are besieging the place, and 15 suspects have been arrested. He did not rule out political motives behind this operation by those whom he termed enemies of Yemen who want to harm the improving relations between Yemen and France and at a time when France

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is mediating the dispute between Yemen and Eritrea over the al-Hanish al-Kabir Island in the Red Sea.

Yemeni Tribesmen Take French Hostages on 'Guided Tour'

NC2801100396 Paris AFP in English 0924 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Jan 28 (AFP) — Yemeni tribesmen took 17 elderly French tourists and their Yemeni drivers on a tour of southeast Yemen after kidnapping the group on Thursday [24 January], the region's governor 'Abd-al-Wali al-Shamiri said Sunday.

The group was taken on the tour of ancient Shabwah Province on Saturday, al-Shamiri said after hearing the report from a French tourist who was released later the same day along with one driver.

The governor said he had been told the remaining hostages were in good health. One tourist was released upon the request of the French ambassador, Marcel Laugel, who wanted to be reassured about the health of the group.

The French hostages are being held in the village of Ayn Hadi, about 450 kilometers (270 miles) southeast of the capital Sanaa.

This is an agricultural region where orange trees and date palms grow and home to the remains of ancient villages and tombs of a pre- Islamic civilization.

The 17 tourists, two drivers and at least one guide were kidnapped on Thursday by Al-Aslam tribesmen, demanding the release of one of their members imprisoned for abducting an American in September 1995 over a money dispute.

The American was released about one week after his abduction.

Over the years tribesmen have kidnapped many foreigners in a bid to win concessions from the central government. Since 1992 around 50 foreigners have been kidnapped in 16 separate incidents. All were released unharmed.

Sanaa Steps Up Pressure for French Hostages' Release

NC2801111696 Paris AFP in English 1045 GMT 28 Jan 96

[Report by Hammoud Mounassar]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Jan 28 (AFP) — Yemeni authorities turned up the pressure on tribesmen holding 16 French tourists on Sunday [28 January] refusing to meet their demands a day after two hostages were released, security sources said.

Armed security forces have been deployed in the southeastern Shabwah province sealing off the village where the tourists have been held hostage since being kidnapped on Thursday.

The authorities ruled out concessions to the al-Aslam tribe demanding the release of a member imprisoned for kidnapping an American last year, the sources said.

"The army intends to pressure the Al-Aslam into freeing the French tourists," a spokesman said. The governor of the Marib province 'Abd-al-Wali al-Shamiri has meanwhile held meetings with military officials, sources close to the governor added.

Negotiations have been underway since Saturday between the tribe and a government delegation made up of officials of tribal origin, including two ministers, a source close to the government said.

One of the tourists and a bus driver were set free unharmed on Saturday after a French diplomat visited the tribesmen, al-Shamiri told AFP.

The French embassy had demanded the release of at least one hostage to determine the condition of the others who were being held in the remote al-'Ayn village, around 450 kilometers (270 miles) south of the capital Sanaa, he said.

The Frenchman who was released told authorities later that the hostages, most of them elderly, were all in good health and had been taken on a tour of ancient Shabwah Province by their kidnappers, al- Shamiri said.

In Paris, the Foreign Ministry confirmed that one of the hostages had been freed. "The situation is evolving in a positive way," a ministry spokesman said without giving further details.

The tribesmen ambushed the two busloads of French tourists on Thursday as they returned to Sanaa from a sight-seeing tour to Marib, 180 kilometres (110 miles) east of the capital.

The kidnappers are calling for the release of a fellow tribesman Zaynallah Duman jailed three months ago for abducting an American national last September.

But the government has refused because Duman is suspected of gun running and smuggling cars and electronic goods from Saudi Arabia, security sources said.

They accused the kidnappers of the French tourists of being linked to the same activities.

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Yemeni security services deployed on Saturday and armed with machine-guns were still sealing off the hostage-takers in al-'Ayn, on Sunday. Several members of the tribe were arrested Saturday at roadblocks around the village.

An army spokesman said the army was confident the French hostages would not be harmed following the arrests, "because the tribe wants to resolve one problem and not create another."

The al-Aslam tribe has several hundred members and is known to possess light arms. [passage omitted]

Released French Hostage Returns to Yemeni Captors

LD2801192596 Paris France-Inter Radio Network in French 1800 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Yemen, negotiations have started for the release of the 17 French tourists who have been held since Thursday. In fact, one of them, who is 65, was released yesterday, but we heard this afternoon that he has rejoined his kidnappers in order to be with his wife. The hostage said that his companions are fine. They were even able to have a guided tour of tourist sites yesterday in the region where they are being held.

The kidnappers established direct contact with the French embassy in Yemen on Saturday. Negotiations are now continuing between the tribe and two Yemeni ministers, but the authorities will not comply with the demands of the kidnappers who are seeking the release of one of the members of their tribe.

The Yemeni authorities are concerned by these repeated kidnappings that may jeopardize tourism in one of the poorest countries in the world.

Yemeni Tribesmen's Release of 17 French Tourists Detailed

NC2901074696 Paris AFP in English 0558 GMT 29 Jan 96

[Report by Hammoud Mounasser]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Jan 29 (AFP)—Yemeni tribesmen on Monday [29 January] freed 17 French tourists whom they had held hostage for four days in a failed attempt to win the release of a jailed member of their tribe, officials said.

"They are all in good health," a spokesman for the governor of the Marib region said after they were released in an unconditional agreement reached late Sunday.

All 17, most of them elderly, were on their way to the city of Marib, 180 kilometres (115 miles) east of here, escorted by French Ambassador Marcel Laugel and the governor of Marib, 'Abd-al-Wali al- Shamiri, he said.

The Al-Aslam tribe abducted the tourists, two drivers and a guide on Thursday as they returned by bus to Sanaa from a sightseeing tour to Marib.

They had been demanding the release of a fellow tribe member, Zaynallah Duman, jailed three months ago for abducting a US national last September.

A French hostage, 65-year-old Jean-Jacques Abassin of Grenoble, and one of the Yemeni drivers were freed on Saturday after Laugel had demanded the release of at least one person to determine the health of the others.

But the Frenchman returned to his kidnappers to be with his wife who was held with the other hostages in the remote village of 'Ayn- Hadi in southeast Shabwah province. The group includes 13 women and a couple in their 80s.

Officials said they had reached an agreement with the kidnappers to release the tourists without conditions at a negotiating session near 'Ayn-Hadi between tribal and government delegates.

It was also attended by Ambassador Laugel who had been allowed to visit the hostages to check on their health.

During negotiations, security forces armed with automatic weapons had sealed off 'Ayn-Hadi, 450 kilometres (270 miles) southeast of Sanaa, and systematically arrested members of the Al-Aslam tribe to put pressure on the kidnappers.

"It's a way of making them understand that they have something to lose if they don't release the hostages," a security official said.

The government refused the kidnappers' demand for Duman's release because he is suspected of gun running and smuggling cars and electronic goods from Saudi Arabia, security sources said.

They accused the kidnappers of the French tourists of being involved in the same activities.

The Al-Aslam tribe has several hundred members and is known to possess light arms.

Tribesmen have frequently kidnapped foreign workers and tourists to make demands on the government such as the release of members from jail, compensation for oil projects on their land or road improvements.

Some 50 foreigners have been seized in 16 separate abductions since 1992. All were released unharmed. [In a related report, Paris AFP in English at 0717

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GMT on 29 January adds the following: "Some of the 17 French tourists who were freed on Monday were wearing traditional daggers given to them by the Yemeni tribesmen who had held them hostage, a hotel employee said Monday.

["The mainly elderly tourists stopped at a hotel in Marib to get drinks before travelling on to the capital Sanaa, about 180 kilometers (115 miles) to the east, an employee at the Balkis hotel told AFP.

["The trip by road to Sanaa would take about two hours.

["The freed hostages, including 13 women, were escorted by the governor of Marib, 'Abd-al-Wali al-Shamiri, and the French ambassador, Marcel Laugel, who had attended negotiations, a Marib official said."]

Yemeni Security Authorities Arrest Four Captors

JN2901130796 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1205 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Security authorities managed to free the 17 French tourists kidnapped by a gang of saboteurs in Ma'rib Governorate. The hostages were released after the village the gangsters had secured themselves in was besieged.

In a statement to the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY, SABA', Interior Minister Staff Colonel Husayn Muhammad 'Arab said four of the captors were arrested and will stand trial to receive the punishment they deserve. He said all the French tourists are in good health and will arrive in Sanaa later today. He added that the security authorities will not be lenient with anyone who violates law and order or harms the peace, security, and stability of society.

Yemeni Official Denies Reported Expulsion of Eritrean Ambassador

MM2601161196 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 26 Jan 96 p 3

[Report by Khalid Hammadi: "Sanaa Denies Ambassadors' Expulsion, Confirms Optimism About Success of Mediation Efforts"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sanaa, AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI — Yemeni Foreign Ministry Under Secretary Ghalib 'Ali Jamil stressed yesterday, Thursday, that neither Eritrea's ambassador nor Yemen's ambassador has been expelled.

Explaining to AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI the reason for the low level of official and media interest in the Hanish issue recently, he said that "economic and political crises are not limited to Yemen. They are plentiful in the world. Yemen does not deny that it is going through economic problems. And it is determined to solve them. But that does not mean that there is little interest in the Hanish al-Kabir problem. The state is working in all directions, internally and externally."

On mediation efforts to resolve the dispute over the Hanish islands between Yemen and Eritrea, he said that "the mediations conducted by friendly and fraternal states are continuing, and we hope that they will produce results acceptable to both parties." He stressed that "Yemen's principled position on this crisis has not changed — no negotiation before [the Eritrean forces'] withdrawal." [passage omitted]

Yemeni Official Confirms Eritrea Expelling Yemeni Ambassador

NC2601185496 Paris AFP in English 1824 GMT 26 Jan 96

[Names as received]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Jan 26 (AFP)—Eritrea has demanded that Yemen recall its ambassador to Asmara as the two countries' dispute over a Red Sea island took a new twist, a Yemeni official said Friday [26 January].

Yemen's Ambassador to Eritrea Ahmad al-Basha is preparing to leave the country, the official said, asking not to be named.

"The Yemeni government will not ask for the departure of the Eritrean Ambassador Ahmad al-Harwi because we want to maintain diplomatic channels and avoid any escalation of the conflict," he added.

Clashes erupted on December 15 between the two countries over sovereignty of the volcanic island of al-Hanish al-Kabir which lies at the mouth of the Red Sea guarding access to busy shipping lanes.

After a three-day battle in which nine soldiers were killed, the island was seized by Eritrean troops.

It is part of an archipelago of nine just outside the Bab al-Mandab straits whose ownership has never been determined by international statute.

A French foreign ministry spokesman said Thursday that Paris had accepted to mediate in the conflict, which Ethiopia and Egypt have also tried to resolve.

Yemen Says Eritrean Decision on Ambassador Termed 'Escalation'

JN2701205496 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Yemen said the Eritrean demand from Sanaa to end the mission of its ambassador in

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Asmara is an escalation of the crisis between the two countries on Hanish archipelago, and said this escalation comes at a time when intensive efforts are being exerted to solve the crisis peacefully.

This came in a telephone interview with Yemeni Deputy Foreign Minister 'Abdu 'Ali 'Abd-al-Rahman who said:

[Begin 'Abd-al-Rahman recording] In fact, the Eritrean Government demanded that the Yemeni ambassador be withdrawn. The Yemeni ambassador is making arrangements for returning home. We consider this a form of escalation at a time when efforts are under way to solve the problem between the two countries peacefully. We do not want any escalation, and we did not reciprocate the Eritrean decision to make it clear to all, to the brothers and friends, and even to the mediators, who actually is the party seeking escalation and who is the party wanting to solve the problem peacefully. [end recording]

Regarding reports on the French mediation efforts and reports saying that Eritrea increased its forces on Hanish al-Kabir island, the Yemeni deputy foreign minister said:

[Begin 'Abd-al-Rahman recording] We read this in the newspapers, and we do not have any comment on it. Our French friends continue their efforts to mediate between the two countries after the French envoy toured the region and listened to the views of all parties. Now, the French Government is taking a specific position on how to deal with the problem and on the mediation between the two countries. [end recording]

Yemen Accuses Eritrea of Reinforcing Troops on Red Sea Island

NC2801075696 Paris AFP in English 0724 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Jan 28 (AFP) — Yemen on Sunday [28 January] denied it flew warplanes over a Red Sea island captured by Eritrea last month and accused Asmara of escalating the conflict by reinforcing its troops on the island.

Eritrean accusations that Yemeni warplanes flew over the island of Hanish al-Kabir "were without foundation," a Yemeni official told the SABA' news agency.

Eritrean Foreign Minister Butros Salamun told his Egyptian counterpart 'Amr Musa in a letter that "a number of Yemeni planes flew over Eritrean forces stationed on the island on Wednesday," Eritrea's ambassador in Cairo said Saturday.

But the Yemeni official countercharged: "Eritrea recently reinforced its troops on Hanish al-Kabir," which it captured on December 18.

"This escalation does not serve the efforts and good offices deployed by several brotherly and friendly countries to resolve conflict."

Egypt, Ethiopia and France have offered to mediate a solution to the dispute over the Hanish archipelago in the Red Sea which erupted into armed conflict on December 15. Eritrean forces seized Hanish al-Kabir three days later.

Sanaa said on Friday that Eritrea had begun reinforcing its troops on the strategic isle at the mouth of the Red Sea adding that Yemen had demanded the recall of its ambassador from Asmara.

Yemen's Salih Discusses Economy, al-Hanish With Muslim Scholars

JN2801201996 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother President Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, accompanied by Vice President Major General 'Abd- Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, met with honorable ulema [Muslim scholars] in a blessed Ramadan evening.

The brother gave a speech in which he welcomed the ulema, who came from various governorates in the republic to attend this Ramadan evening. The president said: This is a blessed, pleasant gathering. This meeting provides us with the opportunity to exchange views. We can listen to the advise of the ulema, and they can hear from us the concerns of the state.

The president noted the economic challenges facing the country following the crisis and the war against secessionists, for which the country has paid the price and which had a negative impact on the economy.

The president said he values the role of the ulema and their efforts that seek to unite national ranks, strengthen national unity, and fulfill their role to educate the citizens and guide them to the path of virtue, as well as their work for the good of the country and the people's happiness and progress.

The president also touched on several issues. He reviewed the developments in the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir. He noted the mediations efforts that were exerted, and are being exerted by several sisterly and friendly states to find a peaceful solution to the differences between our country and Eritrea over the sea borders.

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The president clarified the reasonable course adopted by our country, which sought not to escalate matters and to resolve differences with Eritrea through peaceful negotiations to find a final, just solution to the sea borders problem on the basis of compliance with maritime law and international law, and to spare this vital region any tension that would not serve security, stability, and peace. He noted that according to history, geography, and international law, al-Hanish al-Kabir is a Yemeni island, and that there are several pieces of evidence, documents, maps, and events to confirm Yemen's right to this island. He stressed that our country will adhere to its legitimate rights in accordance with international law and agreements.

Several honorable scholars spoke during the meeting. They touched on several issues on the national arena and the role the scholars play in dealing with these issues.

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Saddam Husayn Reportedly Suffering From Hodgkin's Disease

AU2601130496 Paris AFP in English 1240 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London, Jan 26 (AFP) — Iraqi President Saddam Husayn is being treated by European cancer specialists in Baghdad for Hodgkin's disease, a cancer of the lymph system, Foreign Report, a newsletter of the authoritative Jane's Information Group, reported Friday.

Foreign Report, quoting unnamed Middle Eastern sources, said Saddam had "a slightly bloated appearance because of steroids he is having to take as a treatment, along with radiation therapy."

The report described the disease as a treatable and usually non-lethal form of cancer.

Saddam Denies Reports on Cancer Diagnosis

JN2901111296 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1103 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 29 Jan (INA) — President Saddam Husayn has asserted that the Radio Monte Carlo report that says he has cancer is an attempt to hurt the Iraqi people, to dissuade them from continuing their march, and to undermine their great faith in crossing [to the shores of safety].

While chairing the sixth cabinet session today, his excellency said: Those who know Saddam Husayn know well about his good health, which is a blessing from God, the merciful. They also know him from his activity in leading the state and the party. The Iraqi people know this fact.

He added: Although it is not our custom to reply to such fabricated news, moral responsibility toward our people compels us to reply in order to reveal the truth to our great people and our glorious nation. Therefore, we say that because of the grace of Almighty God, Saddam Husayn enjoys very good health and is not suffering any sickness. He has not suffered any sickness in the past, either, except a prolapsed disc in 1977.

His excellency added: In order to treat the prolapsed disc then, we summoned physicians from Cuba, Yugoslavia, Moscow, England, the United States, the two Germany's, and France. Treatment was then administered.

As you see, I have been performing my duties ever since with the efficiency you know I have during times of war and peace.

His excellency added that he could catch a cold once every year or two, but this is unusual compared to what the citizens commonly experience. Thanks be to God, I suffer from no illness. From this premise, and according to the term used by the Armed Forces about those fit for service, I am safe and sound.

Emphasizing he is in good health, his excellency said: Had it not been winter, I would swim back and forth across the Tigris, as we sometimes do. The enemies and malicious should keep this in mind in the future. This angers them and delights the people, nation, and friends.

President Saddam Husayn said: Our enemies will be deluded if they imagine that with their fabricated reports they can stab the Iraqi people in the back to dissuade them from pursuing their march ahead and from their unswerving faith in the crossing and in progress. We, our great people, and our comrades in the command will always enjoy God's care and protection while the devil will be their master.

Unnamed Ba'thist Saw No Sign of 'New Disease' in Saddam

MM2901120096 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 27 Jan 96 pp 1, 6

[Unattributed report: "Saddam's Illness Is 'His Fear of Illness'"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] New York, London, AL-HAYAH — Circles following the Iraqi file ruled out yesterday any link between unconfirmed reports that President Saddam Husayn has cancer and the Iraqi Government's decision to hold talks with the UN secretary general on the oil-for-food formula stipulated in Resolution 986. The circles believe that economic and political considerations are behind the decision to hold talks.

While saying that "Saddam Husayn's illness is his fear of illness," the circles pointed out that the type of cancer Saddam reportedly has can be cured completely, especially if it is in its early stages. The circles do not believe the disease can be in its late stages, since the man's [health] is supervised by doctors constantly.

An Arab Ba'thist figure who met with Saddam Husayn recently has said that there is nothing to indicate that he is suffering from a new disease, other than the old disease he suffered in his spine and for which he was treated in the mid-seventies by U.S., Cuban, Russian, and European doctors. A U.S. source had said that a U.S. medical team had treated Saddam in the days of President Carter. [passage omitted]

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Saddam's Half-Brother 'Deteriorating' Due to Gangrenous Leg

MM2601160496 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 26 Jan 96 p 4

[Unattributed report: "Health of Iraqi President's Half Brother Deteriorating"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — The health of Watban Ibrahim al-Hasan, half brother of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn and former interior minister, is deteriorating because he has developed gangrene — which requires that his leg be amputated.

Iraqis arriving in Amman have said that the surgery Watban al- Hasan underwent last summer, which was performed by foreign doctors brought from abroad by the presidency, did not succeed. They stressed that the disease has spread in his left leg as a result of the wounds he sustained when 'Udayy, President Saddam Husayn's eldest son, shot him during a private party held in Watban's house in al-Jadiriyah area overlooking the Tigris River in Baghdad on 8 August last year. Foreign doctors were brought from abroad.

Iraqi sources cited elements close to Watban al-Hasan as saying that his health is deteriorating. [passage omitted]

Iraqi Oil Minister Says Ready To Export 2 Million Barrels Daily

JN2601191496 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1830 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 26 Jan (INA) — Iraq is ready to export 2 million barrels of oil daily, which can be increased to three and a half million barrels.

In a seminar aired on the Iraqi television, Oil Minister Lieutenant General Engineer 'Amir Muhammad Rashid said that Iraq's production capabilities, either for exportation or the local consumption of oil and its derivatives, are very high, adding that Iraq is considered the second largest country in terms of oil reserves in the world.

He also pointed to the oil installations destroyed during the aggression. He said that Iraqi technicians managed to reconstruct these installations, thus foiling all enemy attempts designed to besiege Iraq and deprive it from its oil products.

The oil minister added: The Iraqis also managed to find local alternatives for spare parts for these installations. This has been reflected on the production capabilities, he said.

Iraqi Preparations for Talks With UN on Limited Oil Sales Viewed

JN2701134096 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1148 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The United Nations, 27 Jan (INA) — Iraq and the United Nations are scheduled to begin a dialogue on oil for food, medicine, and humanitarian purchases here soon.

Over the past few days, UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali has been conducting intensive contacts with the lobbies of the world body to discuss preparations for the start of the first dialogue session and the composition of the UN delegation that will take part in this dialogue. The chances are that the delegation will be headed by Hans Corell, UN under secretary general for legal affairs, who attended some of these contacts.

The IRAQI NEWS AGENCY [INA] correspondent in New York quoted diplomatic sources who attended recent Security Council consultations as saying that the UN secretary general informed the Security Council on 23 January of his intention to name Hans Corell, a Swede, as head of the UN team to the talks with Iraq.

Iraq announced its acceptance of a call by the UN secretary general for a dialogue on selling oil to make humanitarian purchases. Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz informed Butrus-Ghali of Iraq's acceptance on 19 January.

In a letter to the secretary general, 'Aziz said: "I am waiting for word from you on the date and place of the dialogue."

'Aziz sent this response after he received a letter from Butrus- Ghali on 18 January. Butrus-Ghali expressed his growing concern over the humanitarian suffering of the Iraqi people, as explained in reports by UN programs and agencies.

In his letter, Butrus-Ghali added: "I am calling on Iraq to enter into dialogue with the UN General Secretariat to arrive at mutual arrangements for implementing the oil for humanitarian purchases formula."

The INA correspondent said that official UN spokeswoman Silvana Fao [name as transliterated] read a statement on 24 January, stating that "reports received by the United Nations speak of an acute shortage of food supplies. This could harm a whole generation of Iraqi children." She added: "Four million people risk suffering from severe malnutrition. In addition, fatalities have increased eightfold since 1989."

'Aziz told INA last week that "Iraq's decision to enter into dialogue on selling oil for food, medicine,

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and humanitarian purchases formula came in the wake of intensive contacts with the UN secretary general and several Security Council members that are taking friendly and balanced positions toward Iraq and its legitimate demands."

Paper Urges Syria To Respond to Saddam's Call for Reconciliation

JN2801155596 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1500 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi newspaper AL-THAWRAH today called on Syria — with which Iraq severed its diplomatic relations in 1980 — to respond to Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's call for Arab reconciliation. The Iraqi newspaper's commentary comes at a time when Syrian and Iraqi officials are preparing for holding a coordination meeting in Damascus on 10 February on the Euphrates water.

Iraqi Normalization With Syria Said Proceeding 'at Fast Pace'

JN2901092696 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 29 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Syria and Iraq have taken another important step in their bid to normalize relations and clear the air. Sa'd al-Faysal, first under secretary in the Iraqi Foreign Ministry, traveled to Damascus directly from Baghdad, without going through Jordan.

During the visit, Syrian and Iraqi officials discussed unifying the stand of both countries toward some provocative practices by Turkey. Turkey has grabbed some of Iraq's and Syria's share of water from the Euphrates.

The visit supports quiet Egyptian efforts to clear the air between Iraq and both Syria and Saudi Arabia. The visit is also a continuation of the efforts initiated by French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette during his recent visit to Damascus.

Last week, REUTER quoted De Charette as saying that during his visit to Damascus, he noticed that Syria's position on reestablishing ties with Iraq is more positive.

REUTER cited the French minister as saying Syrian officials expressed concern about the suffering of the Iraqi people as a result of the economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations against Baghdad. Syrian officials also stressed that Saddam Husayn will not leave anytime soon and that the world will have to deal with him.

In a related development, arrivals from Iraq told AL-MAJD the road between Iraq and Syria, which had been closed for years, has recently been paved and repaired.

French Delegation Leader Cited on Results of Visit to Iraq

BR2501151496 Paris LE MONDE in French 25 Jan 96 p 4

[Report by Francoise Chipaux: "Iraq Wants To Renew Dialogue With the United Nations Without Losing Face"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — President Saddam Husayn seems resolutely to want to open a dialogue with the United Nations on the basis of "oil for food." This is the main conclusion drawn by former French Foreign Minister Jean-Bernard Raimond, head of a French parliamentary mission back from a five-day visit to Iraq. Without formally mentioning Resolution 986, which they reject, the Iraqi leaders believe that UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali has sufficient room for maneuver to apply it in a way which does not officially violate Iraqi sovereignty.

Baghdad opposes this resolution — authorizing Iraq to export one billion dollars' worth of oil a quarter for humanitarian purposes and under international control — because of two obligations which, in its eyes, violate its sovereignty: The oil must be sent principally along the oil pipeline crossing Turkey and, in particular, $130 to 150 million must be allocated to the UN humanitarian program in the three Kurdish provinces of Dohuk, Erbil, and Sulaimaniya.

Kurdish Problem

In Mr. Raimond's view, Baghdad considers the fact of the United Nations having sole responsibility for the distribution of aid in the Kurdish provinces as equivalent to a de facto recognition of the separate status of Kurdistan. The government which, since the embargo came into effect on 2 August 1990, has been distributing foodstuffs almost free of charge to the population, keeps updated lists of Kurdistan families, as it does of families in other provinces. Without denying the difficulty of the forthcoming discussions, Mr. Raimond believes that dialogue is needed at this stage. In his opinion, the new attitude of the Iraqi authorities is dictated by the desire to reestablish links with the international community and by the worsening economic situation.

Like most observers of Iraq, the French delegation, which included Jean-Marc Nesme (Union for French Democracy) and Michel Fromet (Socialist Party), has the feeling that the regime is not at the end of its resources, and that, in a certain way, the embargo is having the effect of consolidating it, as Iraqis are placing the responsibility for their misfortunes on foreign countries. "The embargo is a political problem which will only be resolved politically," Mr. Raimond stated.

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Until such time as discussions open, a certain amount of flexibility seems to be appearing, also from the U.S. side. According to reliable sources, Washington, which remains totally opposed to the lifting of the oil embargo, is ready to look more favorably on an exchange of "oil for food." Undoubtedly, in this difficult dialogue, Baghdad is counting on support from France and from Russia, whose new Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov, knows Iraq well.

Iraqi Paper: Lifting Blockade Important for Regional Stability

JN2801120096 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0730 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 28 Jan (INA) — A country with resources like Iraq's cannot remain outside the system of international dealings, according to the newspaper AL-THAWRAH.

In an analysis today, AL-THAWRAH, the mouthpiece of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, says that politicians, officials, diplomats, and journalists throughout the world unanimously agree that lifting the blockade on Iraq is a pressing need, not only to allow the Iraqi people to enjoy their oil resources and contribute to human development, but also to let oil flow from a country with the largest oil reserves in the world in a way that will undoubtedly stabilize the world oil market and create an atmosphere of security and economic stability for international dealings.

AL-THAWRAH mentions a BBC report that cites oil experts as saying that prices in the world oil markets may return to those of 1986 if OPEC and other oil producing countries allow Iraq to take its share of the oil market.

The paper says: It is clear to the whole world that Iraq has constructively cooperated with the United Nations and fulfilled its commitments toward the substantive issues related to Resolution 687. No evil party can continue to take an intransigent and unjustified position designed to maintain the blockade imposed on Iraq.

AL-THAWRAH points out that the voices that call for lifting the blockade are louder than before. These voices indicate that the world is aware of the various forms of aggression Iraq has been subjected to. They are also aware that keeping Iraq from the international dealings will risks economic and security damage at the regional and international levels.

New Director of Iraqi Military Industrialization Takes Over

JN2701184096 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in English 1700 GMT 27 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The ceremony to hand over the post of the director of the Military Industrialization Commission from General 'Amir Muhammad Rashid, the minister of oil, to Mr. Dayf 'Abd-al-Majid Ahmad was held today. Gen. Rashid congratulated Mr. Dayf 'Abd-al-Majid Ahmad on this occasion, wishing him success and progress in his task. Mr. Ahmad for his part praised Gen. Rashid for his efforts as director of the commission.

Iraqi Military Industrialization Chief, Others Take Oath

JN2801193096 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 28 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur has taken the constitutional oath before leader President Saddam Husayn, may God protect him, on the assumption of his new duties as minister of culture and information. Hasan 'Abd-al-Mun'im Khattab, head of the Planning Commission; Dayf 'Abd-al-Majid Ahmad, director of the Military Industrialization Organization; and Jasim Muhammad Khalaf, head of the Financial Audit Bureau, also took the constitutional oath before his excellency the president.

The leader president wished the officials success in their new duties, and reminded them of the significance of oath-taking to men throughout Arab and Islamic history. He urged them to probe the great significance of oath-taking. Moreover, the leader president congratulated Iraqis, through the audience, on the advent of the holy month of Ramadan, the month of prosperity and blessings. He prayed to God Almighty to bring happier returns of this month.

Presidential Office Chief Ahmad Husayn Khudayyir attended the oath-taking ceremony.

Iraqi Ministry of Trade Reduces Food Prices

JN2801214296 Baghdad AL-'IRAQ in Arabic 23 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, INA — The Ministry of Trade decided to reduce the prices of the goods offered at Baghdad International Fair, central markets, and cooperatives, including foodstuffs, such as rice, tea, and vegetable oils as of today, Tuesday.

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Peres Briefs Cabinet on Wye Negotiations

TA2801105596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres says that the parties at the Maryland negotiations have still not started to speak about borders and early warning stations. Mr. Peres said the reports claiming that Syria wants to raise the issue of Israel's nuclear weapons are erroneous. Speaking at the cabinet session, Mr. Peres noted that progress has been made on several issues, adding that the Syrians are willing to hear our positions, mainly regarding the issues of normalization and the comprehensive nature of the peace arrangement.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that Minister Yosi Sarid implicitly criticized several ministers who have spread a spirit of grief, as he termed it.

Today's cabinet session was mostly devoted to the annual intelligence briefing by the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] chief of staff and head of the Intelligence Branch.

On the Syrian issue, several ministers voiced the opinion that for Syria the negotiations are an end in itself, not peace.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1005 GMT on 28 January includes a related report by Shlomo Raz, adding: "Within the framework of the Intelligence Branch's annual briefing, the ministers were told that the Palestinians are trying to fight terrorism. The Palestinians' weak point, at this stage, is the economic issue. Their economic situation is difficult, and they must be helped on this issue.

["The ministers were also told that there is a dangerous trend of lifting the sanctions on Iraq. The United States is unequivocally opposed to the lifting of the sanctions on Iraq, and Israel shares the same policy."]

Baraq Doubts Results of Wye Plantation Talks

TA2601194196 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 26 Jan 96

[Video report by U.S. correspondent Ya'aqov Ahime'ir]

[FBIS Translated Text] What does Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq really think about the vision of peace in our region? Some will say he is cold, reserved, or realistic. Here is a quote: They want to invite 20 Arab leaders to make peace. So, 20 guys wearing yellow jellabas will come. Will this influence all other jellaba-wearers in our region? This is what Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq said in Washington in an interview with our correspondent Ya'aqov Ahime'ir:

[Begin recording] [Ahime'ir] After an interview we conducted with him in New York, the minister told us some things which depict criticism of the optimism among top officials in Jerusalem. I feel a little bit like a roller coaster. We want and say that the peace may include 20 Arab leaders. So, 20 men wearing yellow jellabas will show up. Will this influence jellaba-owners? No, but it creates great expectations in the Israeli public. And if only six jellabas turn up and peace is made with Syria, Lebanon, and perhaps five or six other Arab countries, is that a small feat?

In a news conference at the UN center yesterday, the foreign minister called for a more realistic view of what is happening.

[Baraq] As our ancient rabbis said, we are a people of dust or stars. Every issue for us is either a catastrophe or a miracle, and it must happen in the interval between two newscasts or two newspaper editions. Life is not like that. In a dispute that has lasted 50 years and caused so much blood to be spilled and graves to be dug on both sides, and with such walls of suspicion, long-term vital — I would say almost fateful — interests must be discussed in a methodical and orderly manner while paying attention and determining all the details without ever losing sight of the goal of striving for peace in the face of obstacles.

[Ahime'ir] Minister Baraq also doubts the results of the talks at Wye Plantation.

[Baraq] I do not expect these talks to solve all the problems between us and Syria. Therefore, it does not stand to reason that these talks will end in an agreement.

[Ahime'ir] Furthermore, the gap between Israel and Syria is very wide, the foreign minister told us. Do we agree to have them splash in the waters of Lake Tiberias? And do we agree to the nature of the security arrangements they propose? Are the problems of Lebanon, terror, and water being solved as we in Israel want?

Minister Baraq began using a very diplomatic term — calculated optimism — upon entering the Foreign Ministry, but his immediate circle defines it as standing up for Israel's vital interests. [end recording]

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Peres Clashes With Expert, Criticizes 'Pessimism' on Syria

TA2801194296 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 28 Jan 96

[Video report by political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen]

[FBIS Translated Text] An unusual argument was waged by Shim'on Peres and Brigadier General Ya'aqov 'Amidror, head of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Intelligence Branch's Research Division, at the cabinet meeting today. Delivering his evaluation on the Syria issue, 'Amidror disagreed with Peres' view of the future relations with Syria. After the cabinet meeting, Peres criticized the pessimism regarding the prospects of peace displayed by ministers and senior army officers. Here is our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen's report:

[Rosen] It all started calmly, more or less. Shim'on Peres briefed the ministers on the negotiations with Syria. There is no breakthrough as yet, Peres said, and we have not started in-depth discussions on the issue of security arrangements and deterrence — but I am optimistic, because genuine progress has been made with the Syrians.

Not all the ministers enthused over his remarks. Minister Tzur said that normalization is not a substitute for security arrangements. It was at this point that Peres and Brig. Gen. 'Amidror, head of the Intelligence Branch's Research Division, engaged in an argument. The prime minister said: If you pitch 10 army outposts against 10 hotels, the hotels represent security, too. 'Amidror replied: That is unacceptable to me. Hotels are important as long as there is no war, but when a ruler decides to launch a war, outposts will make all the difference. Peres: I am all for the European economic model. 'Amidror: I disagree with you. You cannot use the model of Europe, which shares the same religion, culture, and economic system.

[Begin Peres recording] First of all, I do not know that there is anyone who has all the information. You do not find information of this kind in the street. Now, remember all the views people had about the Oslo agreements; think of all those Oslo skeptics, and compare it with the situation today. [end recording]

[Rosen] Yet ministers did not share Peres' optimism today. Their outlook was that there is no chance for an agreement with Syria before the elections. Even the usually cautious chief of staff, Lieutenant General Amnon Shahaq, told them: I do not see how the negotiations with the Syrians can be finished within six months.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1900 GMT on 28 January reports: "Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said tonight that Chief of Staff Shahaq did not say an agreement with the Syrians cannot be achieved this year. According to Mr. Peres, the chief of staff said at the cabinet meeting that there is a discrepancy between the limited time and the host of problems in the negotiations with the Syrians. For that reason, he doubted that all the problems can be solved now."]

The time factor worries Shim'on Peres, too:

[Begin Peres recording] These are not mere negotiations with a neighbor; this is also a race against time. [end recording]

Yet at Wye Plantation last week, the race seemed more like a relaxed stroll. This week they will again try to quicken the pace.

Peres, Chief of Staff Disagree on Chances of Syrian Talks

TA2801161596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and IDF [Israel Defense Forces] chief of staff, Lieutenant General Amnon Lipkin-Shahaq, disagreed at today's cabinet meeting over the chances of peace with Syria. The chief of staff said he did not believe the negotiations would conclude within a year, and he considered the current timeframe for achieving peace before the next Israeli elections too short.

The prime minister objected to this assessment, noting that the IDF had also projected a treaty with Jordan would take much longer than it did. Peres said there has been some progress in certain areas in talks with Syria in Maryland and, he added, the Syrians have shown readiness to share the Israeli position on normalizing relations in the framework of a peace agreement.

The talks in Maryland are due to resume tomorrow.

Peres: Jerusalem Will Not Be on Agenda of Any Talks

TA2701201396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2000 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has said that Jerusalem will not be on the agenda of any future negotiations. According to him, Jerusalem was our capital alone in the past, and it would be an utter mistake to create something resembling the former Berlin. The prime minister was speaking at the end of the annual convention of the Union of Orthodox Congregations in America, held in Jerusalem.

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Our correspondent Yitzhaq Feller adds that the prime minister pointed out that the 100th anniversary of the first Zionist Congress will be marked next year, and he believes that another congress that will look ahead to the next 100 years should be held then and its theme should be Israel as a spiritual center.

The prime minister went on to say that the moment Israel reaches an arrangement with Syria and Lebanon another 15 Arab countries will join the circle of peace with Israel.

Israel's Aloni Conducts Unofficial Talks on Jerusalem, Final Accord

TA2801105396 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 28 Jan 96 p 6

[Report by Ben Kaspit]

[FBIS Translated Text] Minister Shulamit Aloni yesterday confirmed holding occasional talks and dialogues with Palestinians regarding the status of Jerusalem and the final arrangement. She added, however: "In no way is this being done on behalf of the cabinet, the prime minister, or the state."

This weekend, Ziyad Abu-Zayyad and Faysal al-Husayni were reported as saying that the government is holding secret contacts with the Palestinians on the Jerusalem issue. They said that these contacts have sometimes reached the ministerial level.

Aloni: "If I happen to sit together with Ziyad Abu-Zayyad, with several participants on each side, we simply exchange opinions. This is a conversation that does not amount to secret negotiations or anything of the sort. Such things have to be done with the authorization of the prime minister or the cabinet."

Aloni says that the ideas raised are usually based on former Mayor Teddy Kollek's plan, according to which Jerusalem should be divided up into boroughs, including a Muslim borough. The security sovereignty will remain in Israel's hands; Yasir 'Arafat and the Palestinian Authority offices will remain in Ramallah, but the Palestinians will be allowed to manage their municipal affairs in the Muslim borough, as well as at the Muslim holy sites.

"We must not forget that 170,000 Palestinians live there and that it is an economic, cultural, and religious center for them as well," Aloni says.

Minister Yosi Beilin, whose name has been mentioned as the official who has authorized Ron Pundaq and Ya'ir Hirshfeld to conduct secret contacts with the Palestinians regarding the permanent arrangement, said yesterday: "I wish it was true. My position regarding the permanent arrangement is well known. Unfortunately, no such secret negotiations are being conducted."

Likud faction chairman Moshe Qatzav yesterday demanded that the government uncover all the details on the negotiations being held on the Jerusalem issue. "I urge the government to stop operating covertly and to cease all negotiations on the Jerusalem issue."

Likud Said Ready To Reevaluate Stands on Oslo, Golan Issues

TA2701122996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Top Likud leaders are debating a proposal whereby, if the party wins the next elections, it will negotiate the permanent agreement with Yasir 'Arafat in a bid to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state. The proposal includes the possibility of recognizing the Palestinian Authority [PA] and declaring the party's readiness to negotiate with the Palestinians, provided they revoke the Palestinian Covenant. Details of the emerging Likud proposal were learned by our party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel.

Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu said he was familiar with the proposals, but he adamantly refused to voice his opinion. Our correspondent notes that Netanyahu did not rule out the idea in internal Likud discussions.

Our correspondent adds that the opposition to the proposals is led by Knesset Member [MK] Beni Begin.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0900 GMT on 27 January adds that, speaking to correspondent Yaron Deqel, Netanyahu said "he will be prepared to talk to any Arab who proves his peaceful intentions and disavows his aspiration to annihilate Israel. Netanyahu believes that the revocation of the Palestinian Charter is a prerequisite for such a dialogue, but it is not enough; the Palestinians should also change their anti-Israeli rhetoric."

[The report further states: "MK Tzahi Hanegbi says that if the Palestinian Charter is revoked, the Likud will have to reevaluate its stands, while MK Eliyahu Ben-Elisar believes the Likud should not recognize the Oslo agreements, as that would cause the party to lose the very reason for its existence. An opposite view was voiced by MK Me'ir Shitrit, who called on the Likud to recognize the Oslo agreements, a step he thought would guarantee the Likud's victory in the elections."

["Our correspondent Pe'erli Shahar interviewed Likud Central Committee activists on the party's stands on the Golan issue and learned that the possibility of

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reevaluating the party stands on the Golan is also being discussed in the Likud."]

A study of the stands held by leaders of the Council of Jewish Settlements in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza [CJSJSG] reveals that 10 of the most active leaders support a dialogue with local PA leaderships on municipal and local matters, while four CJSJSG leaders are opposed to any kind of cooperation or dialogue with the Palestinians. The poll was conducted by our settlement affairs correspondent Gil Litman among 16 active CJSJSG leaders.

One of the poll's more surprising findings was that one of the most prominent CJSJSG leaders is in favor of a dialogue with the top Palestinian leadership on all matters, including politics. The poll among the settlement leaders further reveals that if Knesset elections were held now, five CJSJSG leaders would vote for the National Religious Party, three for the Likud, and seven were undecided.

[Referring to the report on the Likud's inclination to reevaluate its stands on the Palestinian issues, Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1100 GMT on 27 January reports: "Tzomet says the Likud leaders' observations align it with Labor and Meretz. MK Moshe Peled told our correspondent Hayim Hecht that the ease with which the Likud has accepted the Oslo accords places it outside the national camp, and that is liable to prevent the right wing from coming back to power."]

Netanyahu Supports New Likud Positions on PLO, PA

TA2801064396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu supports updating the party's positions on the PLO and the Palestinian Authority [PA] and is soon to convene the Likud Central Committee. The Likud is to consider a proposal to recognize the PA and to commit to negotiate with it if the clauses dealing with Israel's destruction are removed from the Palestinian Covenant. A bitter fight is expected on the issue between Netanyahu and Knesset Member Beni Begin, who rejects the proposal.

Likud MK Alleges Agreement Among 'Arafat, Hamas, Peres

TA2801112696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Likud Knesset Member [MK] Ron Nahman claims there is a secret agreement among 'Arafat, Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], and Peres according to which there will be no terrorist attacks and calm will be preserved until the Israeli elections. In exchange, a Labor-led government will permit the establishment of a Palestinian state.

In an interview with Qol Yisra'el, MK Ron Nahman also commented on voices in the Likud speaking in favor of changing the party's positions. He claims that it is impossible to ignore the existence of the Palestinian Authority in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza, adding that the Likud's current positions should be reexamined.

Jerusalem Radio Reports Relations Officially Established With Oman

TA2701161196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel and Oman officially established relations this evening. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that an Israeli delegation headed by Yo'av Biran, deputy director general of the Foreign Ministry, signed an agreement for the mutual opening of economic representations in the Omani capital, Muscat. On behalf of Oman, the agreement was signed by Yusuf Bin-'Alawi, minister of state for foreign affairs. Our correspondent notes that the offices are scheduled to open within a few days in Tel Aviv and Muscat.

Peres Apologizes to Ethiopian Immigrants Amid Violent Rally

TA2801170796

[FBIS Report] Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1000 GMT on 28 January reports: "Thousands of Ethiopian immigrants demonstrating at the government compound in Jerusalem were dispersed a short while ago with water hoses and police clubs. During the violent demonstration, many car windows were smashed. The demonstrators were pushed away from the road near the Prime Minister's Office, but the situation did not let up, and thousands are still arriving at the site. The police decided on forcible evacuation after the protesters broke through police barriers and started to rattle the gates to the Prime Minister Office."

The report adds that "the demonstration was provoked by the blood donations affair [which started after Tel Aviv MA'ARIV reported that Israeli blood banks are routinely instructed to destroy the blood donations of Ethiopian immigrants, the incidence of AIDS among whom is believed to be 50 times higher than that in the general population] and the high rate of suicide among soldiers of Ethiopian origin."

Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1600 GMT on 28 January adds: "The prime minister has published a statement apologizing on behalf of the Government

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of Israel and of himself for the injury caused to the Ethiopian community. Mr. Peres delivered the apology as he announced the establishment of a commission of inquiry that will examine the Ethiopian immigrants' grievances on the matter of blood donations. Mr. Peres further said that he will hold a special cabinet meeting on the issue.

"The prime minister made these announcements at a meeting with a delegation of Ethiopian immigrants in the midst of the mass demonstration in the government compound. The meeting with the immigrants was attended by the immigrant absorption minister, public security minister, health minister, the chief of staff, and the police commissioner. It has been learned that the chief of staff will meet with immigrant representatives to discuss ways of improving their integration in the IDF [Israel Defense Forces].

"Our correspondent notes that during the meeting, the prime minister and the ministers denounced the violent outburst by some immigrants, as a result of which both policemen and demonstrators sustained injuries.

"Our correspondent Esti Perez reports that during the violent rally today, demonstrators hurled stones at policemen and damaged parked cars. In reaction, police used concussion grenades, rubber bullets, and tear gas. Our correspondent 'Ofra Nehmad reports that the 54 demonstrators and policemen injured in the course of the demonstration were moved to three Jerusalem hospitals. One of the Ethiopian immigrants, who suffered a head injury, is in serious condition."

Israel: Residents Ordered Into Shelters Following Katyusha Attack

TA2901063796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In southern Lebanon, a Katyusha rocket was fired early last night into the security zone about 2.5 km north of Qiryat Shemona. IDF [Israel Defense Forces] military sources say that residents of northern settlements were ordered into their shelters. No one claimed responsibility for the attack. Earlier, a roadside bomb went off during an SLA [South Lebanese Army] patrol in the security zone. No one was injured, and there was no damage.

Israel: General Sees Change in Nature of South Lebanon Attacks

TA2801155396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The head of the army's Northern Command, Major General 'Amiram Levin, says there has been a slight drop in attacks on IDF [Israel Defense Forces] positions in south Lebanon over recent months, but a rise in attacks against the South Lebanese Army.

Speaking at a ceremony for outstanding soldiers in the north, Gen. Levin said Hizballah is continuing its policy of launching attacks from civilian villages. He said the IDF will not escalate the violence in the area, but will respond as necessary to all attacks.

Ramon: U.S. 'Professional Echelons' Hinder Pollard Release

TA2901113696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Interior Minister Hayim Ramon said that the government is doing everything in its power to secure the release of Jonathan Pollard. Ramon asserted that the problems in this matter are with the professional echelons in the U.S. Government and not with the U.S. Administration. Our correspondent Yo'av Ya'aqov reported that Minister Ramon was speaking to high school students in Yafo.

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King Husayn, 'Arafat Discuss Peace Process, Elections

JN2801091396 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 0600 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Majesty King Husayn received President Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the Palestinian National Authority [PNA], at the Royal Hashemite Court last night. His Majesty King Husayn and President 'Arafat held a closed meeting followed by an expanded one. They reviewed the distinguished relations that bind the two fraternal peoples and countries.

His Majesty King Husayn congratulated President 'Arafat on his victory in the recent elections. He said he was glad about the results of the democratic process. During the meeting, His Majesty King Husayn stressed the need for developing bilateral relations in all areas, implementing the bilateral agreements, expanding horizons of bilateral cooperation, and upgrading the work of the joint committees.

For his part, President 'Arafat expressed his deep gratitude and appreciation for His Majesty King Husayn's support for the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination on their national soil and his role in laying the foundations of peace in the region and moving it to an era of building and stability.

His Majesty King Husayn conferred a studded al-Nahdah Medal upon President 'Arafat.

The meeting was attended by Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir; Marwan al-Qasim, chief of the Royal Hashemite Court; His Highness Prince Talal Bin-Muhammad, his majesty the king's military secretary; and Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti.

On the Palestinian side, the meeting was attended by Mahmud 'Abbas, member of the self-rule national council; Muhammad Zuhdi al-Nashashibi, finance minister in the PNA; Hani al-Hasan, member of Fatah Central Committee; media and economic advisers to President 'Arafat; and the Palestinian ambassador in Amman. [passage omitted]

In joint statements made earlier at Amman Airport, His Majesty King Husayn welcomed Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the PNA. His majesty said: We are truly pleased by this visit — the visit by my brother President Yasir 'Arafat to Jordan. We were constantly in contact during the last stage. Everything is moving in the right direction, God be praised. We will do our utmost to help our brothers. We will support them as much as we can until they achieve their ultimate goals and restore their rights on their national soil.

His majesty added: I am happy to congratulate my brother President 'Arafat and our Palestinian family and brothers on what has been achieved thanks to their determination and efforts. I would like to congratulate them on what they have accomplished so far. [passage omitted]

King Husayn, 'Arafat Speak to Press on Talks

JN2701221496 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 27 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn welcomed President Yasir 'Arafat, head of the Palestinian National Authority [PNA], who arrived in Amman tonight on a visit to Jordan. During this visit, President 'Arafat will express his gratitude and that of the Palestinian people to His Majesty King Husayn and the Jordanian Government and people for their sincere congratulations on the election of Mr. 'Arafat as PNA President and for the honorable stands that Jordan has adopted under the leadership of His Majesty King Husayn in support of the Palestinian brothers for the attainment of their legitimate rights on their national soil.

His Majesty King Husayn and President 'Arafat will hold talks on relations between the two brotherly peoples and the means to bolster them in a manner that serves the interest of the two peoples, consolidates brotherly relations, and guarantees their development. The talks will also deal with regional developments.

His Majesty King Husayn and President 'Arafat made statements to reporters:

[Begin recording] ['Arafat] We came here to express appreciation and affection from myself, all my brothers, and the Palestinian people to His majesty King Husayn for his brotherly stands, which his majesty is always eager to safeguard not only with respect to the Palestinian and Jordanian march, but also that of our entire Arab nation. We are all proud of his majesty's stands and all that he does. I pray that God will grant him success and victory and that he may grant us success.

[Unidentified correspondent] Now that the PNA features have become clear following the Palestinian legislative and presidential elections, how does your majesty envisage future cooperation between the two peoples?

[Husayn] God willing, it will be full cooperation in all areas and fields. Over the past period we maintained contact....

['Arafat, interrupting] The king used to continuously contact us, may God bless him.

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[Husayn] As far as we are concerned, they [Palestinians] will always be in our hearts, and we will continue to exert every possible effort to support and assist them until all their hopes are realized under the leadership of my brother President....

['Arafat, interrupting] Under your leadership, Your Majesty.

[Husayn] God bless you.

['Arafat] God willing, you will lead us in prayer in al-Aqsa mosque.

[Husayn] God willing.

[Correspondent] Are you going to meet with Palestine National Council [PNC] members during your stay in Amman?

['Arafat] Yes, yes, yes, yes. I will be proud to meet them.

[Correspondent] Are you going to urge them to meet in the area of the Palestinian Authority to reconsider the Palestinian National Charter?

['Arafat] It should be known that the charter has been amended, as I said when I delivered a speech at the UN General Assembly for the PNC after its meeting in 1988. When they asked me about the charter, I pronounced the famous French word Caduque, which means obsolete....

[Husayn, interrupting] He knows it, and I later learned it from him [laughing]

[Correspondent] Your Excellency the President: Did you discuss the final status negotiations in your meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Peres, when are you going to hold talks on it, and what is the Israeli viewpoint on it?

['Arafat] In May, God willing.

[Correspondent] Did you discuss any point in it?

['Arafat] There are four basic points in accordance with the agreement. As his majesty the king knows—of course we need his help in this. They are: Jerusalem, the refugees, the settlements and settlers, and the final border.

[Correspondent] Your Excellency the President: You are going to begin to build the infrastructure. Are you giving priority to the Jordanian private sector to exercise its right in this?

['Arafat] You cannot say the Jordanians. The Jordanian is the Palestinian and the Palestinian is the Jordanian. We are twins, we are twins, and we are twins. Therefore, allow me to say that this question ignores the facts because we are twins. Our Palestinian situation is our Jordanian situation and our Jordanian situation is our Palestinian situation.

[Correspondent] What about the agreements, which were reached between Jordan and the National Authority. Is there any way to activate them such as the formation of a permanent committee?

['Arafat] We hope so. The first thing is that I and his majesty the king talked about activating them in the best way possible, God willing. [end recording]

President 'Arafat was also received by Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir, Royal Hashemite Court Chief Marwan al-Qasim, Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, Jordan's representative in Gaza Ziyad al-Majali, and Palestinian Ambassador in Amman 'Umar al-Khatib, and the embassy staff.

President 'Arafat is accompanied by an official delegation including Mahmud 'Abbas, member of the PLO Executive Committee; Hani al-Hasan; and Nabil Abu-Rudaynah.

A short while ago, official talks began at the Raghadan Palace between a Jordanian delegation headed by His Majesty King Husayn and a Palestinian delegation headed by President Yasir 'Arafat.

King Husayn Supports Jerusalem as Palestinian Capital

JN2801173896 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Majesty King Husayn headed the delegation that saw President Yasir 'Arafat off when he left Amman today at the end of a two-day visit to Jordan. 'Arafat held talks with His Majesty King Husayn and senior Jordanian officials on Jordanian-Palestinian relations and means for promoting them in all fields, in addition to the peace process and the situation in the region. [passage omitted]

His Majesty King Husayn and 'Arafat spoke to reporters at the airport:

[Begin recording] [Kassab Samawi] Your Majesty and Mr. President, your meetings have always been in the interest of the twin Jordanian and Palestinian peoples. What did your talks achieve in Amman this time?

[Husayn] They have achieved all that is good. They are part of this relationship, of which we are always proud. This is both on the personal level and the twins level, as my brother ['Arafat] said. The Jordanians and Palestinians are one family and one march. We have once again stressed to his excellency the president our pride in all that has been realized and achieved by the

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enlightened leadership and people. We stressed to him our eagerness to offer every possible support toward a promising future. God willing, rights will return to their people and owners on their national soil. God willing, this will be part of the just, comprehensive peace in the entire region. We are proud of our relations. The meeting was frank and explicit in every aspect. It was a fraternal meeting. We hope that we will also meet in the near future. This is natural.

['Arafat] Your Majesty, God willing, we hope we will meet in Jerusalem, and you will lead our prayer at the first of the two qiblahs [direction toward which Muslims turn for prayer—allusion to Jerusalem], the place toward which Prophet Muhammad, God's peace be upon him, performed his nocturnal journey, and the cradle of Jesus, peace be upon him.

[Samawi] Jerusalem is an important issue which will be discussed at the final status negotiations, have you discussed this issue, and are there joint Jordanian-Palestinian steps to support the Palestinian negotiations regarding Jerusalem?

[Husayn] As I said, we will support our brothers with all our capabilities. Needless to say, Jerusalem has its special status. We have many things in it in terms of our sentiments and those of the Arab and Islamic world and the entire world. Therefore, our stand, God willing, is that through which we want to arrive at our rights fully and that Jerusalem, consequently, be the symbol of peace in this region of the world, God willing.

[Unidentified correspondent] Mr. Abu-'Ammar ['Arafat], you spoke about the activation of Jordanian-Palestinian relations through committees. Have you agreed on a mechanism?

['Arafat] Yes. We have also agreed that my brother [Palestinian Agriculture Minister] Muhammad Zuhdi al-Nashashibi shall remain here to follow up these topics with his brother Jordanian counterparts.

[Correspondent] Do you expect meetings soon?

['Arafat] Meetings began this morning with the prime minister and then with bank owners and investors. My brother al-Nashashibi will continue these meetings on economic, agricultural, or industrial issues.

[Husayn] To reassert the objective. We support an independent Palestinian state with holy Jerusalem as its capital.

[Samawi] The Israeli radio today carried a statement by [Israeli Likud Party Leader] Netanyahu in which he says that he might reconsider his stand toward you personally and toward cooperation with the PLO. Is this possible?

['Arafat] He is welcome. Netanyahu should recall that the one who began with the peace conference in Madrid was Shamir. He came and addressed the whole world. [end recording]

'Arafat Meets Jordan's Bin-Shakir, Comments on Ties

JN2801181096 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir received Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the Palestinian Authority, at the Prime Ministry today. Marwan al-Qasim, chief of the Royal Hashemite Court, attended the meeting. They reviewed the spheres of bilateral cooperation, issues of common interest, and the current Arab and regional situation.

Afterward, the two sides held an expanded meeting which was joined on the Jordanian side by Dr. Khalid al-Karaki, deputy prime minister and information minister; 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, foreign minister; and Ziyad al-Majali, head of the Jordanian mission in Gaza. On the Palestinian side, the meeting was attended by Mahmud 'Abbas, also known as Abu-Mazin, Hani al-Hasan, Zuhdi al- Nashashibi, Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, and the Palestinian ambassador in Amman.

During the meeting, the prime minister stressed the distinguished and close relations between the two brotherly peoples. He said that the government, instructed by His Majesty King Husayn, is eager to assist the Palestinian brothers as they build their state and develop its institutions in a manner that achieves the brotherly Palestinian people's hopes and aspirations. They also discussed the current Arab situation and the importance of restoring cohesion among the Arab ranks at this important phase in the history of our nation. Following the meeting, Yasir 'Arafat made the following remarks to our correspondent Salim 'Ali Dhiyab:

[Begin recording] [Dhiyab] Your Excellency the President, what did your talks last night with his majesty the king and today's talks with his excellency the prime minister deal with?

['Arafat] In fact, as usual, the talks were brotherly, productive, and constructive. They bolster and strengthen our determination as we deal with all the difficulties facing us. We find from His Majesty King Husayn and from his brothers in the Jordanian leadership every help and assistance in the long journey we are undertaking. At this point, I want to indicate that this relationship is profound, firm, and strong. In my own name and on behalf of my brothers and my people, I want to salute and express appreciation to his majesty the king for this

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brotherly, admirable stand whenever we review with him all our problems and ask him from time to time to come and resolve these problems. He never minds. As I told him yesterday: Please forgive me if I burden you. He said: No. Never hesitate to communicate anything you want from us, whether it is at the political or economic level. Very importantly, we agreed yesterday and today to activate the bilateral committees on all levels. My brother Abu-Zuhdi [Muhammad Zuhdi al-Nashashibi, Palestinian minister of agriculture] will stay for a while here to follow up those topics. At the same time, God willing, we will soon disclose some news about a joint, constructive action on all economic, investment, political levels to help both of us in the joint march. At the same time, we have also been eager to start a joint effort to bolster, strengthen, and rejuvenate Arab cohesion and boost Arab solidarity to confront the challenges facing our entire Arab nation. [end recording]

'Arafat Reportedly Asks Jordan To Limit Hamas Freedom

JN2901103496 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 29 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-MAJD learned that Yasir 'Arafat issued a protest to Jordanian officials about the freedom that Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] leaders enjoy in Jordan and requested that this freedom be curtailed.

An informed Jordanian source told AL-MAJD that during his latest visit to Amman, 'Arafat expressed concern about the hardline position that the Hamas leadership abroad, especially in Jordan, have taken toward the Palestinian Authority. 'Arafat emphasized that the leaders abroad have prompted the Hamas leadership in Gaza and the West Bank to oppose the Palestinian Authority and dialogue and reconciliation with it.

The source added that 'Arafat accused Hamas' official spokesman, Ibrahim Ghawshah, of creating trouble for the authority with his recent telephone calls to Hamas members in Gaza and Nabulus during a number of popular rallies to commemorate martyr Yahya 'Ayyash.

The source said 'Arafat expressed surprise at the Jordanian policy toward contradictory Palestinian positions. Jordan shows great amity toward the authority but at the same time allows extremist Hamas leaders to use Jordan as a place from which they instigate against the authority and ask Hamas leaders and members in the West Bank and Gaza to reject coexistence with the authority.

The Jordanian source told AL-MAJD that Jordan officially contacted Ghawshah recently and warned him not criticize the authority, incite against it, or cross any red lines that may anger the authority and harm its relations with Jordan.

Jordanian authorities arrested Ghawshah a few months ago for allegedly crossing the red lines and using Jordan as a headquarters to criticize the Palestinian Authority and Israel.

The Jordanian Government expelled both Dr. Musa Abu-Marzuq, head of the Political Bureau of Hamas Movement, and 'Imad al-'Alami, Hamas Political Bureau member. The government also confiscated the passports of Ghawshah and Muhammad Nazzal [Hamas representative in Amman], in addition to arresting a large number of Hamad members.

Meanwhile, AL-MAJD learned that on 27 January, 'Arafat proposed the gradual implementation of confederation between Jordan and the self-rule authority to the Jordanian officials. The Jordanian officials expressed reservations, however, and asked to wait until the pillars of the Palestinian entity have materialized after negotiations on the final status between the Palestinian Authority and Israel.

Hamas West Bank Activist Denied Entry to Jordan

JN2901093296 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 29 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — Shaykh Jamil Hamami, a representative of the Hamas movement [Islamic Resistance Movement] in the West Bank, was denied entry to the Kingdom on Sunday [28 January] by Jordanian authorities, according to a Palestinian delegation that arrived here yesterday upon invitation from the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan. Mr. Hamami, was invited to deliver a lecture on the Jan. 20 Palestinian elections along with three other colleagues. "We wanted to go back too in protest but we saw that we should make it a point to the Jordanian public," said Mahdi 'Abd-al-Hadi, president of the Jerusalem-based Society for International Studies. "It is time we open the doors. It is the Jordanian public who lost the opportunity" to listen to what Hamas had to say about the elections, he said.

Jordan To Deny Iraqi Foreign Minister Passage Through Country

NC2901082996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0803 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 29 Jan (MENA)—An official Jordanian source has stated that his country will

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prevent Iraqi Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf from crossing Jordanian territory on his way abroad. The Jordanian decision follows al-Sahhaf's criticism of Jordan's support for the Iraqi opposition.

The Kuwaiti newspaper AL-SIYASAH, which published the report, cites the same Jordanian source saying that al-Sahhaf has called on Jordan to introduce a federal system that will accommodate the Circassians, Chechens, Palestinians, and the Bedouins, instead of calling for a federal system in Iraq. Al-Sahhaf was responding to remarks in this regard by Jordanian King Husayn.

Jordanian Minister Rules Out Reversal of Reduced Exports to Iraq

JN2901104796 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 29 Jan 96 p 8

[Report by P.V. Vivekanand]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — Industry and Trade Minister 'Ali Abu-al-Raghib Sunday ruled out any reversal of the government's move to reduce Jordanian exports for oil to Iraq.

"The decision was agreed upon by both parties and the agreement was signed by myself and my Iraqi counterpart," Muhammad Mahdi Salih, Mr. Abu-al-Raghib said. "There cannot be any reversal of the move now."

Mr. 'Abd-al-Raghib was replying to a JORDAN TIMES question on reports that the local business community was lobbying the government to reverse the decision to reduce to $220 million the export credit guarantees that Jordan offers to Iraq.

Until now, the Jordanian government used to extend $400 million every year in export guarantees to Iraq, offered through an escrow account at the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ). The account was supported by Iraqi oil supplies to Jordan exempt from the international sanctions against Iraq.

Senior official said the move had no political bearing and that it was warranted by Jordan's need to build its own foreign exchange reserves.

According to the officials, the Iraqi exports to Jordan could settle only part of the Kingdom's food and medicine exports to Iraq and the rest was being accumulated in Iraqi debts to Jordan, now estimated at $1.2 billion.

Mr. Abu-al-Raghib told the JORDAN TIMES Sunday: "Any increase in exports to Iraq under the protocol means an increase in the Iraqi debts to Jordan, and we simply cannot afford to do so."

Mr. 'Abu-al-Raghib said the issued of Jordanian exports to Iraq was not discussed in his talks with Iraqi Industry Minister 'Adnan 'Abd-al-Majid, who visited Amman over the weekend.

"The focus of the discussions was the work of the Jordanian-Iraqi Industrial Company and plans to convene a general assembly meeting of the company said Mr. Abu-al-Raghib.

The Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI) said, meanwhile, it plans to send a delegation to Baghdad to work out a new structure for Jordanian exports to Iraq.

The ACI moves come amid intense debate in the local press over the pros and cons of the Jordanians move to reduce its exports of goods and services to Iraq. The reduction in exports under the protocol has upset the local business community.

"We have made strong representations to the government, arguing that any reduction in exports to Iraq would have a very negative impact on local industries," said 'Ali al-Dajani, advisor to ACI Chairman Khaldun Abu Hasan.

"Many industries have already processed products for exports to Iraq, and they will suffer immense losses if they could not execute the orders from Iraq," said Mr. al-Dajani.

Mr. al-Dajani said Mr. Abu Hasan were expected to lead a Jordanian trade and industry delegation to Iraq early next month to discuss the issue and seek formulas which would avoid losses for Jordanian industries whose main market is Iraq.

Mr. al-Dajani did not reveal details of the ACI strategy, but local businessmen said the visiting delegation would seek to convince the Iraqi government to channel some of its orders for cash imports to Jordan.

"There is a minimum level of Iraqi imports for cash," said a businessman. "Obviously we could try to get some of those orders although it is highly unlikely that Baghdad would look favourably upon such demands."

According to officials, Jordan is now awaiting Iraq to formally specify the kind and volume of Jordanian products it would like to be included in the protocol.

"The goods should be worth a total of $150 million this year. The rest is in services, including the transport of exported goods to Iraq," said one official.

Meanwhile commentators in the local press have criticised the government decision.

Fahid al-Fanik, a noted Jordanian economist, wrote in the AL-RA'Y daily on Saturday that while it was "easy to leave an export market, it is difficult to return to it."

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Dr. al-Fanik said the reduction in exports to Iraq would reflect negatively on the Kingdom's overall exports, particularly at a time when the country is following a policy of export-led economic growth.

Other commentators in the market said shares at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) would suffer severe losses in value since many of the local companies have strong business connections with Iraq.

Jordan's Cabinet Approves Cooperation Agreements With Israel

JN2801091796 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 0600 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In a session presided over by Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir yesterday evening, the Council of Ministers approved a host of cooperation agreements signed with Israel recently. The agreements include: transportation, aviation services, scientific and cultural cooperation, mail services, communications, sea borders, and al-'Aqabah-Elat agreement. The agreements will be referred to his majesty the king for endorsement. [passage omitted]

Bahraini Amir Thanks King Husayn for 'Continuous' Support

JN2801191196 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 28 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn received a telephone call from his brother Bahraini Amir His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah.

Shaykh 'Isa thanked his majesty for Jordan's continuous support for Bahrain, and expressed his appreciation for His Majesty King Husayn's fraternal stand toward the recent incidents in Bahrain.

During the contact, His Highness Shaykh 'Isa said that he is looking forward to meeting His Majesty King Husayn, reiterating his invitation to His Majesty King Husayn to visit Bahrain. His highness also congratulated his majesty on the advent of the blessed month of Ramadan, and wished his majesty continued good health and success.

Jordanian Information Minister Offers Resignation

JN2901101696 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 29 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-MAJD received confirmation that Dr. Khalid al-Karaki, deputy prime minister and information minister, last week told Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir that he wants to resign. A reliable source told AL-MAJD that al-Karaki attributed his oral resignation to his desire to retire and return to academia.

AL-MAJD, however, confirms that political and professional reasons pertaining to normalization [with Israel] are behind al-Karaki's resignation. Al-Karaki is about to leave the media and return to the University of Jordan.

AL-MAJD learned that al-Karaki came under pressure and official criticism from higher quarters following press statements in which he said there is no need for any media ties or agreements between Jordan and Israel, because Israel does not have a ministry of information. He added that radio and television cooperation between the two sides can be coordinated through the Ministry of Communications, not the Ministry of Information.

It is said that al-Karaki, who is opposed to the recent Jordanian measures to keep a distance from Iraq, is no longer fit to lead Jordanian media in an era characterized by rapprochement with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries.

It is also said that al-Karaki recently proposed to the prime minister that all lawsuits filed against opposition newspapers be dropped and that reconciliation take place between the government and these newspapers. This proposal was rejected by other ministers, but is still under discussion.

AL-MAJD's correspondent at the University of Jordan confirms that al-Karaki asked the Arabic Language Department in the Faculty of Arts to assign him two lectures in the next semester [which began 27 January].

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Lebanon's Fadlallah Criticizes U.S. 'Bullying' of Islamic World

LD2701182296 Tehran IRNA in English 0805 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, Jan. 27, IRNA — A prominent Lebanese religious leader Seyyed Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah, leading the Friday prayers in Beirut, condemned pressures of the global arrogance against the Islamic Republic of Iran, regarding such measures as part of a full-scale war against the Islamic world.

Pointing to the hostile moves of the global arrogance against Iran and revolutionary Muslims, who refuse to serve interests of the arrogant powers, the Lebanese alim said that Iran's calling on the Muslims to become free from foreign influence is viewed as an act of terrorism by the global arrogance since it would imperil their interests.

Fadlallah also stressed that the presence of U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf region, and the Red and Mediterranean seas is only meant to supress the regional liberating movements and retain the U.S. domination over the region.

Through plundering the wealth of the people in the region and influencing the price of oil, Washington aims to lead the Arab and Muslim countries to poverty so that it would be able to dictate its terms, he added.

He concluded by underlining the necessity of struggle by the Muslim nations against the U.S. bullying and domination, urging them to make their utmost to achieve independence and liberty.

Meanwhile, leader of the Islamic Tawhid [Unification] movement, Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban, addressing the Friday prayers congregation in the northern Lebanese port city of Tripoli, reiterated that those Arab leaders who have made peace with the Zionist regime are responsible for the domination of the Zionists over the Muslim ummah.

He stressed that the Muslim nations will never make peace with the Zionists, and that all accords reached in this regard have not been signed on behalf of Muslims.

Lebanon: Hizballah Radio Comments on Disturbances in Bahrain

NC2801122396 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 28 Jan 96

[From the "A Pause with an Event" feature]

[FBIS Translated Text] A battle has been going on between the defenseless people of Bahrain and the ruling regime since 5 January 1994. This is one of the noblest battles and it is a glowing example of a people's boundless potential for struggle. Even the regime itself acknowledges that the battle is a nonviolent civil conflict. This struggle is to secure rightful demands in the face of authorities armed to the teeth and supported by foreign—above all U.S.—military bases and forces.

The Bahraini authorities feel helpless to quell the masses' struggle. They are pointing fingers of accusation at the Islamic Republic of Iran, trying to give the impression that the opposition movement is confined to the Shiites. They have followed two courses of action: First, apprehending 2,000 people, including eight Shiite leaders in Bahrain, notably Shaykh 'Ali al-Jamri; and second, accusing Tehran of sparking the disturbances. Manama alleges that Iran supports the rebellious Shiites in order to give the impression that the rest of the Bahraini people do not approve of these incidents.

The problems in Bahrain are just a sample of the realities in the Gulf region. The Gulf region is witnessing a clash between the good old days and the concerns of the future. No one paid attention to the repeated incidents that led to the uprising. Youths would regularly assemble before the Labor Ministry seeking the jobs given to foreign workers. The uprising broke out when the need for jobs created nostalgia for the short-lived democratic parliamentary experiment between 1973 and 1975. The Bahraini authorities are sidestepping the problem, which they consider to be an extremist phenomenon involving violence and terrorism.

In line with the shared fate and security of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] countries, the GCC interior ministers met last spring and stressed that the riots in Bahrain were motivated by terrorists. The GCC ministers accepted the Bahraini authorities' view that the unrest was created by foreign hands and was alien to Islam, as their statement said. However, neither the princes of the countries floating on oil nor the Manama princes took the trouble to look for the real causes of the uprising. They do not want to admit that unemployment and the despotic ruling family were the root cause. Amir 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah still does not bother to consider the cause of the so-called extremist phenomena. He insists on burying his head in the sand or in the oil wells and continues to point his finger at Tehran in the belief that this will enable him to avoid the consequences.

Anyway, the Bahraini people's uprising proves that our land is still able to kindle torches to dissipate the darkness covering the region from the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf even after the armies of oppression and normalization have invaded the palaces of the rulers. The armies that came to the Gulf are backed by the

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United States and its global order to pave the way for the Zionists to usurp the remaining riches. The Bahraini foreign minister has often boasted about his meetings with Shim'on Peres, the Israeli enemy's former foreign minister and current prime minister, at the United Nations and in Bahrain, not to mention other meetings in Oman and elsewhere in the Gulf. The Manama government is busy putting an end to the unanimous popular demand for freedom, democracy, and bread and opposing those who call for normalization with the Zionist entity.

The heads of Israeli delegations thought that the Gulf region was wide open to all sorts of piracy and social and political shamelessness. However, they soon discovered that the Bahraini people are more vigilant than their official rulers, who, like most official Arab rulers, are pursuing normalization with the Zionist enemy. Perhaps the constant and firm stance of the uprising movement in Bahrain will set an example for all popular movements in the Arab countries.

The Arab authorities will fall if they discover that they are isolated from the people and thus losing the justification for their existence. Perhaps this situation has generated rivalries among the ruling clan members. Hamad Al Khalifah, heir apparent and army commander, threatened that the armed forces intervention in order to demonstrate his ability to solve the crisis, which his uncle Khalifah Al Khalifah, the prime minister and police commander has failed to control or contain. Trying to show his strength, he arrested thousands of people.

Bahraini newspapers have reported that the government has decided to arrest prominent Shiite personalities, charge them, and try them. The government also threatened to impose martial law. These acts and threats were accompanied by a visit to Manama by General Norman Williams, the officer in charge of logistical affairs and security for U.S. naval forces. He met with the Bahraini defense minister and other officials.

A U.S. newspaper, reporting on current events in Bahrain, described it as Saudi Arabia's back yard. It said the situation in Bahrain has deteriorated and everyone wishes the good old days would return. What is happening is indescribable, matters have reached a crucial point, the country stands at the edge of an abyss, and military intervention is in the cards.

This intervention is what U.S. General Williams meant when he said that his talks with the Bahraini defense minister dealt with military plans. To justify sending the army to confront the people, the Bahraini Government recently faked some fires and bombings and blamed them on men of religion and rebels. The Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain described the authorities' announcement on sending in the army as proof that they had lost control of the critical situation.

Anyway, sending the army in for a showdown with the people betrays the authorities' helplessness. This measure will not serve the country but will cause further instability and tension, with concomitant grave consequences. In other countries, sending armies into the streets to confront people has only caused devastation. A diplomat in Manama commented on this threat, saying that the Al Khalifah clan have begun to dig their own graves, having refused to heed advice from those who love the Bahraini people. He said that he wished there were a wise man among them to put an end to their impetuosity.

The situation in Bahrain is indeed delicate and the Manama government cannot possibly continue to ram its head into a wall, because it might turn out to be rock hard and break its head and cause it and the country to disintegrate. If there were any wise men among the Al Khalifah clan, they must advise their brothers to reach an understanding with the popular movement, be just to the oppressed, and give freedom back before it is too late. Reliance on the Americans will only fan the fire.

Lebanese Hizballah Urges Bahrain To Fulfill Popular Demands

NC2701072996 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah has called for the release of all political prisoners and detainees in Bahrain. It warned of the dangerous situation in that country. Hizballah released a statement saying that leveling accusations at foreign parties abroad will not alleviate this crisis in any way. It said that the problem in Bahrain involves the majority and is not a sectarian one. The problem is one of a political majority confronting a political minority that is trying to exploit power and national resources and refusing to recognize the people's right to parliamentary representation and to holding public posts. Hizballah said that the Bahraini Government's practices will only increase resentment and confrontation and (?exacerbate) the situation. What is required is not to quell popular demands but to discuss and fulfill them.

Lebanese Hizballah Calls For Release of Prisoners in Bahrain

NC2601182196 Paris AFP in English 1734 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, Jan 26 (AFP)—Iranian-backed Shiite Moslem Hizballah guerrillas in Lebanon called Friday [26 January] for the release of political

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prisoners in Bahrain and warned of a crisis in the Gulf state.

In a statement from Beirut, the militant group accused Bahrain's Sunni leadership of being a "minority which is trying to monopolise power and refusing to recognise the rights of people to a parliamentary representation."

It blamed the "repressive practices of the Bahraini government for only increasing tension" and called for a "serious dialogue which does not sideline the rights of the people and its fair demands."

Manama has said that 174 people were arrested in recent political violence which flared again after several months of calm in the Gulf archipelago, but lawyers said there had been 2,000 arrests in past weeks.

Violence first erupted in December 1994 after the arrest of a Shiite cleric who had called for the restoration of parliament suspended in 1975. Sporadic unrest lasted until April and left 13 dead.

Manama for the first time publicly blamed the Shiite Islamic republic of Iran of being behind the troubles.

But the Hizballah said that "accusing those abroad will not lessen the gravity of the crisis."

Hizballah spearheads resistance to the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon.

Palestinian Fighters in Lebanon To Leave for Self-Rule Areas

NC2701204696 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2015 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sultan Abu-al-'Aynayn, Fatah Movement's political representative in Lebanon, has asserted that a first group comprising 500 Palestinian fighters will leave Lebanon before the month of Ramadan ends on 20 February for the self-rule areas to join the Palestinian police.

Abu-al-'Aynayn said most of these fighters are now residing in the 'Ayn al-Hulwah Camp. He added that a high-level Palestinian delegation will visit Damascus and Beirut soon to discuss arrangements for the departure of this group.

Israeli Shelling, Overflights in Lebanon Noted

NC2701064496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli acts of aggression against the south and western al-Biqa' continue. According to THE NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY correspondents this morning, the Israeli forces last night bombarded several areas in the central and western sectors in the south and dropped flares. Israeli military aircraft flew several sorties over the south last night.

No IDF Casualties After 4 'Terrorists' Killed in South Lebanon

TA2701121996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Four terrorists were killed last night and early this morning in south Lebanon. Our troops sustained no casualties. Our correspondent Ilan Ro'e reports that during the night, an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] unit on operational activity spotted some terrorists in the area of Kafr Hunah in the northeastern sector of the security zone. Three terrorists were killed in the ensuing exchange of gunfire. Combing the clash site this morning, a paratroop unit spotted and killed another terrorist. To repeat, there were no casualties among our troops.

Our correspondent Karmela Menashe reports that a large quantity of war materiel was found in the terrorists' belongings, and the IDF believes they planned to carry out an attack in the security zone.

The paratroop unit's operation in the area lasted several hours and was conducted with the assistance of artillery and helicopters.

Six Lebanese Said Killed by Israeli Forces in South Lebanon

NC2701123596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli forces this morning bombarded the al-Qatranah woods and the outskirts of al-Surayri. Israeli helicopters also raked these areas. This morning, Israeli helicopters flew over the south and repeatedly over Kafr Huna in the central sector. Israeli Cobra helicopters raked the area with machine-gun fire. Security sources said that the Israeli artillery fired approximately 150 rounds at the western al-Biqa' area.

At dawn today, fishermen's boats came under fire from Israeli gunboats as they sailed along the shore from Dayr Qanun, Ra's al-'Ayn, and al-Qulaylah south of Tyre. The Israeli gunboats damaged the nets and strongly warned the fishermen against approaching the area again.

Lahd Radio [Kafr Killa Voice of the South] has reported that six Lebanese resistance men were killed at dawn today by the Israeli forces when they tried to carry out an operation in the occupied area.

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Amal Claims Attacks on Israeli, SLA Posts in Lebanon

NC2801113496 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1015 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Groups of the Lebanese Resistance Battalions, Amal, attacked a joint mechanized Israeli-South Lebanese Army [SLA] patrol on the al-Dabshah-'Ali al-Tahir highway this morning. They hit them with a hail of machine-gun fire and rockets, destroying an armored personnel carrier and killing or wounding the patrol members, according to Amal's statement. It adds that another Amal group assaulted the 'Ali al-Tahir post, but the results are not known. The statement said that a third group attacked the al-Dabshah post and clashed with the personnel manning it for 15 minutes. Fires broke out in the al-Dabshah and 'Ali al-Tahir posts, the statement notes.

Meanwhile, the outskirts of the al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa, the Lebanese army's derelict barracks, and the vicinity of Qasr Ghandur came under an artillery barrage from the Israeli positions in al- Zaffatah and Qal'at al-Shaqif.

SLA Members 'Continuing To Harass Government Officials' in Lebanon

NC2901070096 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Following Israeli and militia [South Lebanese Army, SLA] terrorist acts in the occupied territories, the NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY [NNA] reports that SLA members are continuing to harass government officials. According to the NNA, several government officials have been deported from the area while others have chosen to leave to avoid humiliation. The SLA practices have been prompted by low-morale among members following the Lebanese judiciary decision against [SLA Commander] Agent Antoine Lahd.

Over five SLA members from the occupied village of Bayt Lif deserted SLA ranks two days ago.

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Syria's al-Asad Meets Lebanese President al-Hirawi

JN2701165896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi arrived in Damascus at 1600 today on a visit to the Syrian Arab Republic. The Lebanese president is leading the Lebanese delegation to the meetings of the Higher Syrian-Lebanese Council. The Lebanese delegation includes Nabih Birri, speaker of the Chamber of Deputies; Rafiq al-Hariri, prime minister; Michel al-Murr, deputy prime minister and interior minister; and Faris Buwayz, foreign minister. President Hafiz al-Asad led those who received President Ilyas al- Hirawi at Damascus's western entrance. [passage omitted]

Following their arrival at the People's Palace, Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Ilyas al-Hirawi held a meeting. The meeting was attended for the Syrian side by 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and Muhammad Zuhayr Mashariqah, vice presidents of the republic; 'Abd-al-Qadir Qaddurah, speaker of the People's Assembly; Mahmud al-Zu'bi, prime minister; Dr. Salim Yasin, deputy prime minister for economic affairs; and Faruq al-Shar', foreign minister. The Lebanese side included Nabih Birri, speaker of the Chamber of Deputies; Rafiq al-Hariri, prime minister; Michel al-Murr, deputy prime minister and interior minister; and Faris Buwayz, foreign minister. The meeting was also attended by Nasri al-Khuri, secretary general of the Higher Syrian-Lebanese Council.

President Hafiz al-Asad hosted an iftar banquet at the People's Palace this evening in honor of Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi. The banquet was attended by members of the Lebanese side to the Higher Syrian-Lebanese Council. [passage omitted]

Higher Syrian-Lebanese Council Meets in Damascus

JN2801072596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0515 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Hafiz al-Asad and Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi met at the People's Palace after al-Hirawi arrived in Damascus yesterday afternoon. [passage omitted]

The Higher Syrian-Lebanese Council resumed its meeting after an iftar banquet hosted by President al-Asad in honor of his great guest. [passage omitted]

The Higher Council reviewed the General Secretariat's report and the steps that have been achieved to consolidate bilateral cooperation in various fields to implement the agreements related to the Treaty of Fraternity, Cooperation, and Coordination.

The Higher Council discussed future areas for bilateral cooperation and made some decisions. It also discussed the results of the Barcelona conference for the Mediterranean Basin states and found that the interests of both countries requires speeding up bilateral coordination on all levels to unify their positions on all issues related to the Mediterranean Basin.

Al-Asad pointed out the importance of enhancing the mutual confidence between both countries and achieving more practical steps to serve the interests of the citizens, in accordance with the pan-Arab, historic, and geographic links between them.

Al-Hirawi expressed satisfaction with the progress and development of relations between the fraternal countries. He also stressed Lebanon's eagerness to continue enhancing these relations in the interests of both Lebanon and Syria. The Higher Council will continue its meeting today to finalize discussions on the agenda topics and sign the decisions that have been made. [passage omitted]

Higher Syrian-Lebanese Council Resumes Meetings

JN2801155796 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Higher Syrian-Lebanese Council resumed its meetings in al-Rawdah Palace at 1130 today, under the chairmanship of their Excellencies President Hafiz al-Asad and President Ilyas al-Hirawi.

The meeting was attended for the Syrian side by 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam, the vice president; 'Abd-al-Qadir Qaddurah, speaker of the People's Assembly; Mahmud al-Zu'bi, prime minister; Dr. Salim Yasin, deputy prime minister for economic affairs; and Faruq al-Shar', minister of foreign affairs. The Lebanese side included Nabih Birri, speaker of the Chamber of Deputies; Rafiq al-Hariri, prime minister; Michel al-Murr, deputy prime minister and interior minister; and Faris Buwayz, minister of foreign affairs.

Higher Syrian-Lebanese Council Concludes Meetings

JN2801184996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Higher Syrian-Lebanese Council resumed its meetings in al-Rawdah Palace at 1130 today, under the chairmanship of their Excellencies President Hafiz al-Asad and President Ilyas al-Hirawi. [passage omitted]

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This expanded meeting was followed by a closed meeting between President Hafiz al-Asad and President Ilyas al-Hirawi.

The Higher Council resumed discussing issues on the agenda. The council signed a number of resolutions related to the work and activities of the council general secretariat. The council also reviewed some of the international political and economic developments and stressed the need to develop and upgrade both countries' economy and joint cooperation to serve the economic and political interest of the two sides.

Moreover, the Higher Council entrusted the general secretariat with preparing a working paper on the future tasks aiming at promoting bilateral cooperation in the various fields. This paper will be submitted to the Follow-up and Coordination Committee before it is presented to the council at a regular or extraordinary session. The council also discussed political affairs of mutual concern, was briefed on the latest developments in the peace process, and reiterated the positions of the two states adhering to just and comprehensive peace based on the principles of the peace process and international legitimacy resolutions. The council also expressed satisfaction with the bilateral coordination currently underway.

His Excellency Ilyas al-Hirawi, president of the Republic of Lebanon, left Damascus at 1400 today. [passage omitted] President Hafiz al-Asad led those who saw the Lebanese delegation off at the Damascus western entrance. [passage omitted]

Syrian Press Views Syrian-Lebanese Council Meetings

JN2801100596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 28 Jan 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] The newspaper TISHRIN discusses the meetings of the Higher Syrian-Lebanese Council, led by Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Ilyas al-Hirawi. It points out that the Higher Council will resume its meetings in Damascus today to assess progress toward cooperation and integration between the fraternal countries and to discuss developments in and prospects for the peace process.

TISHRIN asserts that Syrian-Lebanese cooperation has reached an advanced phase, has benefited the people in both countries, and has enhanced their unified position on Israel's continued attempts to circumvent the objective of achieving a just and comprehensive peace and to evade its requirements in terms of complete withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon.

TISHRIN notes that Syria, which is currently holding talks with Israel in Maryland under U.S. sponsorship and with U.S. participation, said it will not sign any agreement with Israel that does not coincide with a similar agreement between Israel and Lebanon. The paper says: This simply means that Israeli withdrawal from the Golan should be accompanied by a similar withdrawal from southern Lebanon. It also means that the Syrian and Lebanese peace tracks go hand in hand. No one can undermine the unified position of both countries, their cohesion, and their interests.

TISHRIN notes Israel's attempts to effect Syrian-Lebanese disengagement and deal with each country separately. This policy, however, collided with the solid will of both countries. In addition, al-Asad and al-Hirawi have said there will never be any bargaining over even an inch of Golan and southern Lebanese soil, and that as far as Syria is concerned, there is no alternative for Israel but to fully withdraw to the 4 June 1967 lines. Both presidents have said that there will be no peace outside the framework of the resolutions of international legitimacy. This solid position resulted in the acknowledgement by the whole world that the Syrian and Lebanese tracks go hand in hand and that peace is impossible in the Middle East without Syria and Lebanon. Their participation is a basic factor and even a guarantee for a stable, firm, and comprehensive peace in the region.

Concluding, TISHRIN asserts that Syria will continue to support Lebanon in its efforts to liberate southern Lebanon and western al-Biqa' from Israeli occupation. Likewise, Lebanon will continue to be a strong supporter of Syrian efforts to regain all of the occupied Golan. The joint Syrian-Lebanese endeavors must reach their objectives and regain the peoples' rights, regardless of Israeli trickery and procrastination. Ultimately, there will be no peace without Syria and Lebanon.

The newspaper AL-BA'TH discusses the same topic. In an item headlined "Unbreakable Fraternal Relations Between Syria and Lebanon," the paper says: The continued coordination between the leaders in both countries is based on the distinguished relations between the two populations, countries, and neighbors. The enemies of Arabism have used various means to try to undermine and break these relations in order to serve Israel. But the joint sacrifices, the blood that has flowed over the homeland's soil, and the insistence on destroying the forces and tools of conspiracy have resulted in well-being, security, and stability. At the same time, they have also resulted in a united position that not only expresses the will of both brothers, but also the will of a nation that views Damascus and Beirut as

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a symbol of loftiness and a hope for regaining its rights, without selling out any of these rights.

AL-BA'TH adds: Al-Asad's concern for Lebanon is the same as his concern for Syria and for all brothers committed to the nation's cause. Likewise, al-Hirawi's concern for Syria and its honorable positions is the same as his concern for a pan-Arab, active, and effective Lebanon through Lebanon's pan-Arab commitment and through the promotion of model sisterly relations with Syria.

AL-BA'TH concludes: The Higher Council, which discussed the peace process, as well as fraternal relations, is undoubtedly proceeding toward the future with confidence, assurance, and security in a way that serves the common destiny and a single existence.

Under the headline "A Confident March," the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says: Syria has remained the definite supporter and the force that backs Lebanon and is always ready to make sacrifices to save Lebanon and consolidate its positions in the battle to liberate its land, regain southern Lebanon, and unite all Lebanese territories. Syria has never been more eager to regain the occupied Golan than to liberate southern Lebanon, and it will not accept giving up an inch of soil in either country.

AL-THAWRAH asserts that this view stems from a firm pan-Arab position that stresses the fact that the Arab cause is a pan-Arab issue and that what harms Lebanon also harms Syria. Likewise, what harms the Palestinians or any Arab also harms Syria. This is why Syria has called for cooperation, consultations, and coordination in the battle for peace, with all its challenges and with the threats posed by circumstances and developments.

AL-THAWRAH adds: Syria will continue to work for cooperation, solidarity, and coordination on the pan-Arab level. It will also extend its unlimited support to Lebanon in order to adhere to a just and comprehensive peace that regains all territory and rights and preserves pride and dignity.

Much has been done in the march of the fraternal Syrian-Lebanese relations, AL-THAWRAH concludes. Both countries still have much to do to enhance cooperation and build in framework of plans and phased agreements that serve the strategy of integration. This framework will translate the will of the united people in both countries and will respond to the challenges posed by the current and future phases. Through its positive results, the meeting of the Higher Syrian-Lebanese Council will be a definite sign that the aspirations will be fulfilled and that there is agreement on all the issues that are in the interest of both fraternal countries and the entire Arab nation.

Damascus Radio Reviews Syrian-Lebanese Cooperation Drive

JN2801165896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1235 GMT 28 Jan 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The first round of the Higher Syrian-Lebanese Council meetings was held in Damascus yesterday and today, under the chairmanship of President Hafiz al-Asad and Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi. The significance of this round stems from the significant developments through which the region has been passing in general and the peace process in particular. The significance of this round also comes from the importance of consolidating cooperation and coordination between Syria and Lebanon on the various levels, especially since the Treaty of Fraternity, Cooperation, and Coordination produced tangible results, which had a positive impact on the people of the two sisterly countries.

A quick review of the cooperation drive, which the two states chose to pursue as a model for Arab cooperation and genuine solidarity, clearly shows that the decisions taken by the Higher Council in the past imparted to our performance in the areas of politics, economics, culture, and other aspects of daily life another dimension that is in line with the two states' presence and side-by-side participation on the Arab and regional levels.

Perhaps the joint positions adopted by the two states in the Barcelona Conference for instance, are the best proof of the importance of the presence, participation, and role played by Syria and Lebanon in the Middle East, and consequently in Europe. This was indicated by the outcome of talks and discussions of the Higher Council yesterday as it reviewed the results of the Barcelona Conference.

Therefore, and due to the success achieved in this framework, the council reiterated the need to further accelerate coordination between the two sisterly states on all levels, so that their stands would be unified on the issues that are related to daily life in the Mediterranean littoral states and so that this cooperation will reflect on the bilateral and collective relations binding Syria and Lebanon on the one hand and the rest of the world and its blocs on the other. Since our ambitions are great and our hopes are broad, we are required to increase the pace of joint action in a manner that fosters mutual confidence and achieves more practical steps that serve the interests of the citizens and realize their aspirations

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in harmony with the national brotherly historical ties, as well as the indescribable links that cannot be confound to borders.

What has thus far been achieved is undoubtedly great, and deserves to be highly appreciated. However, the prospects are wide open for even more achievements. Our hopes are high and our dreams are great, and this requires strengthening confidence, unifying interests, and making a qualitative leap in the model relations between the two states. This leap should correspond to the historical, geographical, social, spiritual, and blood ties. The bigger this leap, the bigger the service we will be rendering to our nation and to our Arab peoples in the Arab world. This is a national responsibility that the two peoples are undertaking with high determination and strong will.

The two sisterly states — Syria and Lebanon — have proven their ability to cooperate, coordinate, and work in harmony at a time when Arabs are dispersed. They also proved that they are capable of confronting policies of division and partition. Syria and Lebanon are now taking confident steps toward a bright future whose bases were laid down by the leadership of the two states which entrenched its pillars and provided the means for their steadfastness and survival.

Syrian Editorials Praise Unity With Lebanon on Peace Process

JN2901133296 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0900 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 29 Jan (SANA) — Today's issue of TISHRIN hailed the meeting of the Higher Syrian-Lebanese Council, led by Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Ilyas al-Hirawi, which was ended yesterday. It described the unity of the Syrian-Lebanese position on the peace process as a strength of the two countries, which want a just and comprehensive peace and hope for a solution based on the resolutions of international legitimacy through full withdrawal of the occupation forces from the Golan and southern Lebanon.

In an editorial, the newspaper said: While Syria, alongside Lebanon, is engaged in the battle for just and comprehensive peace, it is aware that the pan-Arab, fraternal, historical, and geographical relations between the two countries are the basis of a unified and integrated position toward all circumstances and changes and form the cornerstone for overcoming all difficulties, restoring rights and land, and preserving dignity.

The newspaper said the results of the Higher Syrian-Lebanese Council meetings, in terms of bilateral agreements, joint concepts, and unified political positions, will have great impact on the peace efforts and the sincere efforts to advance the Syrian and Lebanese tracks and on the future prospects for strategic and fraternal cooperation between the two countries.

The newspaper emphasized that even though the Maryland talks have not resulted in a successful, objective, and balanced solution that is conducive to the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy, there is still an opportunity to do so during this week's round of talks in Maryland and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region on 5 February, so that a just and comprehensive peace can be reached by ending the Israeli occupation and agreeing to parallel [mutawaziyah], equal [mutasawiyah], and equitable [mutaqafi'ah] security arrangements.

In its editorial today, AL-BA'TH said that the subject of consolidating bilateral Syrian-Lebanese cooperation, which the Higher Syrian-Lebanese Council discussed under the chairmanship of Presidents al-Asad and al-Hirawi, is very important and can be realized. This requires the concerned quarters in both countries to continue their contacts and discuss everything that is beneficial to them. This also means translating words into deeds.

The newspaper said the council expressed satisfaction with the bilateral coordination on the peace process and that the inseparability between the Syrian and Lebanese tracks has become an established fact that is impossible to ignore.

It said the coordination between Syria and Lebanon, which began at the onset of the peace process in Madrid in 1991, is a model for other states. If the other Arab parties involved in the peace process adhered to this model, as Syria and Lebanon have done, the Arab situation would be different.

Concluding the article, the newspaper said Syria and Lebanon are working hard for the success of the peace process and have offered everything they can for the sake of a just and comprehensive peace. Israeli has continued to maneuver and has not offered the minimum required to advance the peace process. The newspaper said: We are still looking forward to Israeli positions that serve the peace process and push it in the right direction. Undoubtedly, there is a chance now, but will such Israeli positions materialize?

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Damascus Radio Demands Return of Golan, 'Security Equitability'

JN2601170096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1235 GMT 26 Jan 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher attended part of the Syrian-Israeli talks in Maryland yesterday. He said he hopes it is possible to find positive trends, suitable to achieve progress.

The U.S. secretary of state has always cautioned against jumping to conclusions or expecting decisive progress because he knows the complications in the issues that are being discussed between Syria and Israel.

The talks during the past two days focused on the nature of peace and the security arrangements that will be taken on both sides of the previous lines following the Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights. Although the Israeli Government is staying silent about the issue of complete withdrawal from the Golan Heights and is deliberately shrouding its position with ambiguity, it demands that Syria be clear about the issue of the nature of peace and exaggerates its security concerns. Israel wants a peace that is more than warm. Israel wants a bitter conflict, and all the tragedies, calamities, and pains it produced to be forgotten within a short period of time. This is against nature. Israel also wants complicated security measures to prevent, as it claims, a surprise attack against it. This simply means it does not trust peace as an ideal guarantee for security, or that it does not want to abide by the just peace that would return to each party its rights and end a painful chapter of the region's history.

On every occasion, Syria has explained that the kind of peace it seeks is the peace of right and justice: the peace that would return territory and rights to their rightful owners, and the peace that would uproot injustice and suppression and establish a new era of security, assurance, tranquility, and stability. On every occasion Syria explained that the real peace is the peace of peoples. In order to achieve the peace of peoples, there is no alternative but to remove every manifestation of occupation and to recognize rights. This simply requires Israel to make a complete withdrawal from the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon, withdraw its aggressive troops to beyond the 4 June 1967 lines, and implement in full the UN resolutions that govern the peace process. Israel must also establish the supremacy of international law, and not the law of the jungle. So far, Israel has been exercising the law of the jungle and threatening to use it, while the ABC's of peace demand that international law and norms must reign supreme. The Golan Heights have been Syrian territory since time immemorial, and there is nothing that allows Israel to bargain with Syria over its right to regain its territory.

Syria has proposed equitable [mutakafi'ah] and even [muta'adilah] measures that would strengthen peace and not infringe on security. Does Israel have any excuse not to adopt security equitability [al- takafu' al-amni], especially since it possesses an enormous arsenal of all types of weapons?

Syria has said that peace is possible. The achievement of peace requires a better response, seriousness, and understanding of the facts of peace on the part of Israel. Instead of responding objectively to the conditions of peace, Israel wants to shackle the negotiating Arab parties with chains, which does not agree with the spirit of the just peace, which indicates a limited confidence in peace, and which would obstruct peace.

Syria cannot accept any measure that threatens its sovereignty or infringes on its dignity. It adheres to its right to regain all of its territory and rights.

Syrian Press Blames Israel for Growing Lebanese 'Resistance'

JN2701072996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 27 Jan 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a commentary on the tense situation in southern Lebanon following Israel's increasing attacks against villages and towns in South Lebanon, AL-THAWRAH says that the logic of war and occupation have obstructed the arrival of peace and stability in the region.

The paper stresses that Israel must understand one thing and act accordingly: It attacked Lebanon and occupied its territory; therefore, it is only natural that it is confronted by increasing resistance and a national response against the aggression and the occupation. Israel is responsible for the continuing resistance and the losses the resistance inflicts on its troops in Lebanese territory.

AL-THAWRAH says: Peace in the region is no longer an Arab demand. It is now a world demand. The achievement of peace does not hinge on a single party, but on all parties and on the efforts exerted by the U.S. sponsor, especially since U.S. President Clinton has recently underscored his country's responsibility for peace in the region and the world. Lebanon has the right to regain its territory, and it adheres to the constants that were the basis for its joining the Madrid Conference: Resolution 425 and Israel's unconditional withdrawal from the occupied south and western al-Biqa'.

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Syrian Papers View Maryland Talks, Underline Mutual Security

JN2701090196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 27 Jan 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "Withdrawal Is the Basic Issue," TISHRIN discusses the Maryland talks between the Syrian and Israeli delegations, which have been adjourned until Monday.

TISHRIN says: Israel wants to determine the nature and the character of peace. It also wants security arrangements tailored to its size, so that it can accept these arrangements even if they are made at the expense of Syrian security and sovereignty. Furthermore, Israel wants to control the water resources and establish economic ties.

TISHRIN adds: Israel wants all this even before it utters a single word about the withdrawal, its geographic comprehensiveness [shumuliyatih al-jughrafiyah], and its extent [madah]. This means that Israel wants everything. It wants to get what it believes are the gains of peace without explaining the return, represented by the complete and comprehensive withdrawal from the Golan Heights, and without taking into consideration even the most basic rights of Syria to security and sovereignty over its territory and its right to regain this territory in full.

Israeli exaggeration does not serve the peace process or help achieve a genuine just and comprehensive peace. Syria has the right to regain its territory in full and guarantee all its rights to water and water resources. Israel already knows the conditions it wants to impose at the Maryland talks will undoubtedly influence the course and climate of these talks and slow them down.

TISHRIN concludes: Syria stresses that peace will not succeed unless all manifestations of occupation, regardless of their cause, are removed. The quick achievement of important and acceptable results at the Maryland talks starts with Israel's positive response to the substantive and crucial issues and to the requirements and bases of the peace process, as stipulated by UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the Madrid formula.

In a commentary entitled "Codeword Peace," AL-THAWRAH discusses the same subject. It stresses that peace means complete Israeli withdrawal, equitable [mutakafi'ah] and equal arrangements, and mutual [mutabadal] security. Anything else means diverting the issue to side labyrinths.

AL-THAWRAH says: Unless Israel states clearly — and clearly applies this statement in practice — that it intends to make a comprehensive withdrawal to the 4 June lines before anything else, we do not believe it is serious about discussing anything. The United States, the world, and international legitimacy must hold it responsible for everything.

AL-THAWRAH explains: The question is not one of time or elections, as they allege to the world. The question is that of an Israeli decision. Will Israel decide on complete withdrawal and equal and parallel [mutawaziyah] arrangements or not? AL-THAWRAH wonders if the Israelis can make such a decision. It urges a pressing, practical role by the United States to make Israel utter the real codeword — a clear Israeli pronouncement that it has made such a decision.

Concluding its editorial, AL-THAWRAH says: No one but the United States can do that. It must make Israel shoulder the blame for obstructing the peace process, especially since Israel has always let the United States down and prevented it from fulfilling its international commitments and initiatives. Israel embraces the United States in the world. We do not believe that the United States will allow Israel to continue to challenge and undermine its prestige before the world.

Syrian Paper Comments on Maryland Talks

JN2701114296 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0845 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 27 Jan (SANA)— The newspaper AL-THAWRAH expresses the hope that the Israeli leaders' various statements will not be the grounds for actions by the Israeli delegation, meaning that these statements should not act as a guide for the Israeli delegation to the Maryland talks. If they do, there will be very serious problems.

In an editorial today by Editor-in-Chief 'Amid Khuli, the paper says: If this is the case, it means that the Israeli delegation has decided to abort the talks and to lead the peace process to a dead end. The proof is the statements, which are sometimes astonishing.

The paper says: If these statements represent the Israeli stand, then why are the Israelis in Maryland to resume the peace talks?

Baraq's statements over the last few days and Prime Minister Peres' subsequent statements do not call for any kind of optimism, the paper adds. It is as if four years of the peace process have been an attempt to cheat and mislead the world.

What is the meaning of the statements Baraq made yesterday on the Golan, on the withdrawal from it, and on what he calls the depth of withdrawal for the depth of peace? the paper asks. This was Rabin's dictum.

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Baraq's statements about withdrawal are in addition to his remarks on the water issue, Lake Tiberias, and other issues that have nothing to do with the spirit of peace or any desire for it. It is as if he is carrying his guns to the negotiating table, as a Western analyst described it.

There is no big difference between the statements of Baraq and Peres, the paper says. If there was a difference, it would be only in words. The essence of the position remains the same. The statements differ in how they were expressed, not in content. If not, Peres should correct Baraq's statements and prevent him from making more, especially since Baraq is pushing the talks and the peace process toward a tunnel. His statements constitute a rejection of the bases of the peace process: comprehensive withdrawal and equitable [mutakafi'ah], parallel [mutawaziyah], and equal [mutasawiyah] security arrangements on both sides of the 4 June lines.

Unless Israel says clearly — and clearly applies the statement in practice — that it intends to make a comprehensive withdrawal to the 4 June lines before anything else is done, we will not believe it is serious about any discussions, AL-THAWRAH says. The United States, the world, and international legitimacy must hold it responsible for everything.

The question is not one of elections timing, as they claim to the world, or that Syria is playing this card, the paper explains. What is in question is of an Israeli decision. Will Israel decide on complete withdrawal and equal and balanced [mutawazinah] arrangements or not?

The paper asks: Has Christopher, during his visit to the two delegations yesterday, found this decision?

The paper urges a pressing, practical role by the U.S. secretary of state to make Israel utter the true codeword. Enough tampering and maneuvering, it says.

Damascus Radio Cites U.S. State Department on Maryland Talks

JN2701153096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington — The first round of talks on the Syrian-Israeli track of the peace process, which was held in Maryland over the past three days, ended yesterday. Talks will resume at the same place next Monday and may continue until Wednesday, in the presence of U.S. mediators.

In a statement to the director general of the SYRIAN ARAB NEWS AGENCY, SANA, Walid al-Mu'allim, head of the Syrian side to the talks, said this round witnessed serious and in-depth discussions of security arrangements. Each side presented his view of security arrangements on both sides of the 4 June 1967 lines after the withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from the Golan. The talks showed the difficulties and gaps between the views of both sides regarding these arrangements.

Al-Mu'allim added: This round provided an opportunity to explain and explore the position of each side on various aspects of security arrangements. It was agreed that Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator of the peace process, will hold unofficial consultations during the weekend with both sides prior to the resumption of talks next Monday.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher took part in the talks on 25 January. Christopher said the United States is determined to continue its efforts to achieve a peace agreement on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks in 1996. Christopher also had an iftar banquet with the participants in the talks.

The U.S. State Department said wide gaps continue to exists between the stands of the two parties. Nicholas Burns, U.S. State Department spokesman, said last night there is no evidence of real progress in disputed issues between the Syrian and Israeli sides. Burns added: It is no surprise for us that the talks lasted a long time, were difficult, and that wide gaps continued to exist between the stands of the two parties.

In another statement, Burns said the United States believes it is very important to continue the talks between Syria and Israel. However, peace is not at hand. Burns said: Progress will not be achieved overnight. We are talking here about increased efforts. Burns added that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who joined the talks between the two sides on Thursday, urged the negotiators to make more efforts. He said Christopher offered substantive ideas to the Syrian and Israeli negotiators to try to make them achieve quick progress in the peace talks and to review all issues on the agenda. The talks are proceeding at a slow pace. Burns said that during a telephone conversation with Christopher yesterday, Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said all parties must redouble their efforts to reach an agreement in 1996. Burns said the three days of talks enabled each side to better understand the views of the other side, adding that negotiators on both sides adhered to their stands.

It was announced in Washington yesterday that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will begin a new tour of the Middle East on 5 February to advance the peace process between Syria and Israel. Israeli radio said Christopher is scheduled to leave Washington next Friday on a tour, during which he will visit Croatia, Bosnia, and Serbia, before heading for the Middle East.

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The U.S. secretary is also expected to visit the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Damascus Radio Says Israel 'Disturbing' Atmosphere of Optimism

JN2701162296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 27 Jan 97

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] No sooner had the Maryland talks between the Syrian and Israeli delegations begun an in-depth and detailed discussion of substantial issues than the statements of Israeli officials returned to casting doubts on the opportunity for peace and concentrating on the wide gaps regarding some details. These details caused a stalemate in the peace process during the term of former Israeli prime minister Yitzhaq Rabin. It is true that the Wye Plantation round of talks is most critical and sensitive, since this round addressed, in detail, the objective requirements of peace. It is also true, however, that getting down to the nitty-gritty of peace can never overshadow the optimistic impressions about the resumption of talks. This is true unless Israel wants once again to exaggerate differences, instead of narrowing them, or adhere to stands that are far removed from the essence and basics of peace to increase challenges and difficulties.

We have never been too optimistic. However, transforming the atmosphere of optimism into actions is possible if there is goodwill accompanied by actions. Israel is countering the U.S. determination to achieve tangible progress this year by disturbing the atmosphere of optimism with clouds of pessimism. This is not in harmony with the previous realities which Israel sought to market prior to the Maryland talks. The Maryland talks established a new, effective mechanism with the participation of the U.S. sponsor, who increased his participation to maintain the required momentum and help untie knots.

The peace talks are now addressing substantive issues. It was hoped that Israel would accompany its words with deeds, so that we may sense a change in the Israeli negotiating approach and proposals. The purpose of this is to create formulas and mechanisms by which Israel would respond to the resolutions of the Security Council and the land-for-peace principle. This should lead to commitment to the principle of full withdrawal from the occupied southern Lebanon and the Golan and acceptance of reciprocal [mutabadalah] security arrangements, in accordance with the principles of justice [al-'adl], equality [al-tasawi], and equitability [al-takafu'] on both sides of the 4 June 1967 lines.

The good atmosphere in which the Maryland talks are held requires a fruitful framework that allows surmounting obstacles, bridging gaps, and reaching an understanding on all issues in a spirit of concern about a just and comprehensive peace. The negotiations have every opportunity to be fruitful if Israel abandons the method of blackmail and stops wagering on partial withdrawals, phased agreements, and fragile settlements.

Syria looks forward to achieving tangible progress on the Syrian-Israeli track that would pave the way for the Lebanese-Israeli track to reach a comprehensive peace that guarantees security and stability in the region. The closer the Israeli position gets to this sound view of peace — which agrees with the aspirations of the international community — the greater the opportunity to achieve real progress.

Syria is committed to the objective requirements of peace on the basis of full withdrawal in return for full peace. Syria can never cede any part of its territory or give up any of its rights. It will not enter the maze of bargaining over full sovereignty, nor will it relinquish its territory, rights, and waters. Syria agrees with Israel on instituting security arrangements. However, it insists on reciprocal commitments in this regard in a manner that translates the principles of equitability, equality, and reciprocity on both sides of the 4 June lines.

All this can never happen according to what Israel wants in line with its expansionist ambitions in land, waters, and control, and in line with electoral calculations and domestic considerations that contradict the requirements for a just and comprehensive peace and its clear foundations — the resolutions of international legitimacy.

Exploring views is now over. No one of those concerned or those who follow and observe the peace process is now unaware of the firmness of Syria's positions and its attitudes toward all the components of peace. Israel alone should heed the facts and act accordingly, since a just and comprehensive peace is in the real interest of all peoples in the region and the world. All details must be discussed in this spirit so peace can prevail.

Damascus Radio Assails Palestinian Elections, Amending Charter

JN2701213796 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1630 GMT 27 Jan 96

[Unattributed commentary; from the "Palestine Broadcast" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] Once the one-sided elections held by the limited self-rule authority were over, Israeli officials began to call on the self-rule authority to fulfill the pledge it made to cancel the Palestinian National Charter provisions on the liberation of the occupied Palestinian territories and returning to them.

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It is clear from recent statements by Israeli officials that they will not accept a decision the self-rule authority council will make in this respect. Neither will they agree to the formulation of a new national charter by the authority's council or even by the Palestine National Council [PNC]. What they want is a PNC decision that will cancel the charter provisions Israel wishes to cancel.

Peres explicitly mentioned this when he said that Israel will not accept the formulation of a new Palestinian National Charter, and that it is determined to cancel all the provisions that call for the liberation of the occupied Palestinian territories. This practically means destroying the PLO. Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Eli Dayan asserted Israel is determined to wrest a cancellation decision from the PNC when he said: There are no more excuses for the PNC—notice that he did not say the self-rule council—to postpone the cancellation decision, particularly since Israel agreed to allow all PNC members to return to the West Bank and Gaza.

It was noted that following Israel's announcement that it would allow the PNC members to return, PNC Speaker Shaykh 'Abd-al-Hamid al-Sa'ih said he would not return unless he was allowed to return to his home in occupied Jerusalem.

We notice how Israel makes unilateral decisions. Why are only PNC members allowed to return while Palestinians in the diaspora are not allowed to return also? PNC members are the representatives of the Palestinian people through their militant organizations; they do not only represent themselves. If the PNC were to convene, it should do so away from the pressures of the occupation. All the Palestinian forces should be democratically represented on the basis of concern for Palestinian national unity.

Unfortunately, these criteria were impaired when the Palestinian arena became divided in 1983. It was under the canopy of this state of division that the self-rule authority elections were held. The large-scale Palestinian opposition to the elections was ignored. The self-rule authority also forged these elections, and dealt blows to the independent candidates who were deceived by the promises that democratic principles regarding candidacy and voting would be respected.

Syrian Press Criticizes Arab Normalization of Ties With Israel

NC2901151496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1440 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 29 Jan (MENA)—The Syrian newspaper TISHRIN calls on the Arab countries that intend to establish contacts and relations with Israel to wait and to support Syria's position of establishing a strong and firm peace based on justice and the restoration of Arab rights.

In an article published today, the paper notes that even friendly countries far from our region, such as Malaysia and Pakistan, refuse to establish relations with Israel before peace is completed and Israel fully withdraws from the Golan and southern Lebanon.

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Afghanistan

Afghan Opposition Groups Reject Rabbani Proposal on Cease-Fire

LD2601193596 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0230 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The groups opposing the Kabul administration have recently rejected the administration's proposal on the observation of a temporary cease-fire in honor of the holy fasting month of Ramadan.

Reports received from Islamabad says that yesterday a spokesman of the Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] said: The recent proposal by the illegal Kabul administration is [word indistinct] and would not be acceptable to the Afghan nation.

The Kabul administration announced on Sunday [21 January] that it will observe a unilateral cease-fire in honor of the holy month of Ramadan and asked the opposition to start talks in the sacred month of Ramadan. The spokesman said: We want to remove all inter-Afghan hostility. He asked Rabbani to resign and said that Rabbani was the only barrier on the path of the consolidation of peace in Afghanistan.

Mola 'Abdol Baqi Turkestani, representative of the Jonbesh-e Melli-ye Eslami [National Islamic Movement] in Islamabad, in reply to the Kabul administration proposal, said: We have never embarked on fighting and the Kabul administration has imposed fighting on us. In reply to the Kabul administration's proposal for talks and understanding, Mola Turkestani said: The last month's visit to Mazar-e Sharif by a high ranking delegation of the Kabul administration was about holding talks with General Dostam on making arrangement for the visit of Rabbani.

Other members of the High Coordination Council have openly rejected the recent proposal by the Kabul administration and viewed it as a pretext for the continuation of power in the hand of Kabul administration.

It should be mentioned that the Taleban group who has besieged Kabul for the past several months has rejected Rabbani's proposal on the opening of supply routes and holding of talks, and has viewed it with suspicion.

Kabul Hit by Severe Economic Crisis, Famine

LD2701145696 Tehran IRNA in English 1451 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Jan. 27, IRNA — Astronomical price hikes, shortage of foodstuff, sharp decline in the purchase power of people and siege of the roads leading to the Afghan capital city have exposed the oppressed people of Afghanistan to acute economic bottlenecks.

IRNA correspondent in Kabul quoted a desperate Afghan woman as saying that she could only obtain seven kilos of wheat, adding that she would face more acute problems in coming days.

Another woman said that she had used up the last pieces of wood available for warming the room where she and her children were living, noting that she will be unable to preserve the health of her children from now on.

The woman who has lost her husband in the civil war added that Afghanistan has been left alone, with domestic groups and parties as well as international bodies not caring for the deplorable conditions in the country.

Rabbani Holds Meeting To Discuss Food Situation

LD2701171596 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1430 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An extraordinary session of the high government authorities and organs, chaired by esteemed professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, was convened today.

The session discussed the current situation including (?the supplies of) foodstuffs and fuel, and ways to speed up transporting food and fuel to Kabul and the procedure for distributing of these commodities to the public and needy people.

Kabul Authorities Announce Actions Against Hoarders

LD2701173896 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1430 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This is an announcement by the Kabul security commission:

In view of restriction in the supply of consumer goods and basic materials in the city, and in order to neutralize the enemy's economic sabotage, the city's security commission announces the following points for organizing the situation of supply and demand of basic and consumer commodities in the city:

In accordance with the provisions of the Anti-Hoarding Law, various commissions, consisting of relevant organs, have been assigned to start work, starting from today, for the detection, seizure, and prosecution of hoarders.

The hoarders' storehouses, in accordance with article 8 of the Anti-Hoarding Law, will be immediately opened and the goods will be sold in public locally to

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needy people at a reduced price. The hoarder will be immediately prosecuted and severely punished.

All national traders are thus being asked to cooperate with ensuring the supply of basic materials in order to remove the difficulties facing their compatriots.

Esteemed citizens are being asked to cooperate with the security forces in regard to the detection and investigation of hoarding store houses.

The government has taken effective and serious steps, in order to remove the current economic difficulties and respectfully asks the citizen to ignore the enemy's negative propaganda.

Afghan Goverament Announces Plans To Distribute Food, Fuel

LD2701192796 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An extraordinary session of high government authorities and organs under the chairmanship of the esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, was held today.

The session discussed the current situation, including the existence of food and fuel and ways of speeding up transporting it into Kabul and the procedure for distributing these commodities to the public and needy people.

The presidential press office reported that as a result of comprehensive discussion and assessments, it was revealed that there was no food shortage in Kabul, but that a sufficient quantity of food and fuel exists. A number of hoarders and profit-seekers are trying to exploit every situation for their personal gain. They are not taking into account the needs and difficulties of the people and are trying to create an atmosphere that will cause fear and worry in the people of Kabul.

Related and responsible government organs have strongly been instructed to deal seriously and legally with the hoarders [words indistinct] during this holy month, which is a month of worship and blessing; they should fulfill their Islamic role by supplying the goods needed by the city residents. Otherwise, under the instructions given to the responsible authorities, the illegal storehouses of the hoarders will be opened and they will be dealt with in keeping with the Islamic law.

In order to provide the people of Kabul with the facilities they need and to remove concern, which has been caused by some unrealistic propaganda, the extraordinary session of the high government authorities and organs decided that the Islamic State should distribute two billion afghanis worth of food among the residents of Kabul.

Esteemed 'Abdol 'Aziz Morad, the head of the presidential press office and the presidential spokesman, told BAKHTAR that in keeping with today's decision by the high government authorities and organs, the distribution of food will start tomorrow. The material includes fuel worth two billion afghanis. The esteemed 'Abdol 'Aziz Morad added: The material will be supplied from the existing reserve stores. It is planned that every day between 40 and 50 truckloads of wheat, flour, petrol, diesel, and kerosene will be given to the Kabul municipality and Afghan Red Crescent from the reserve stores. The presidential spokesman added: Some of the material will be given to Kabul bakers in order for them to supply bread at a low price and fixed weight. A quantity of the material will be handed out to poor families and the needy. Morad said: Although there are sufficient reserves of food and fuel, no shortage of those materials will be felt taking into account the arrival of food convoys; and the prices will also fall. The residents of Kabul are assured that they should not worry about the food shortage. The situation of the past two or three days has been caused by the acts of a number of opportunists. Urgent measures have been taken to deal with the situation.

Afghan Commentary: UN Official's Remarks Caused Food Shortage

LD2701213796 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Despite the enemy's efforts, convoys of foodstuffs continue to arrive in Kabul and prices have fallen considerably. A BAKHTAR political correspondent writes: [passage omitted] According to DARIZ newspaper, the residents of Kabul, who are under siege, consider UN aid as very little, and they attribute the past two to three days of food shortages to remarks made by Martin Barber, the head of the UN humanitarian program in Afghanistan. What is interesting is that Barber has been able to assess food reserves in Kabul. He said that in two week's time food reserves in Kabul would run out. No doubt those remarks provoked hoarders and profit-seekers to conserve foodstuffs. As a result, a considerable quantity of foodstuffs disappeared from the market and prices increased. [passage omitted]

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Council Approves Goverment Measures on Kabul Food Supply

LD2801204196 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The decision by high government authorities on the distribution of food and fuel worth 2 billion afghanis was approved during today's High State Council session. The Secretariat of the High State Council reported to us that the High State Council meeting was held under the chairmanship of esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. During the session, talks were held on the arrival of basic necessities in Kabul and their distribution to the needy. The High State Council described as positive the arrival of food convoys in Kabul and the distribution of food and fuel. As a result of these measures, prices are falling every day and the people of Kabul are becoming confident that there is sufficient food and fuel in the city and they are happy with the situation. The High State Council insisted that the distribution of food and fuel shall continue in an orderly way every day. The law enforcement organs shall prevent hoarding and the illegal storing of goods. A series of other decisions were also made by the High State Council concerning the provision of facilities to Kabul residents. During the session a number of other issues were also discussed and decisions were made.

Twelve Kabul Citizens Arrested on Hoarding Charge

LD2801205096 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A number of hoarders were captured in Kabul today. BAKHTAR reported to us that, during a coordinated operation by Kabul's Security Commission and other related organs, 12 hoarders were captured in different areas of Kabul, and their food was sold at fixed prices.

The esteemed General Mohammad Zaher Akbar, the operative deputy of the Security Commission, told our correspondent that following Kabul's Security Commission statement, commission officials arrested a number of hoarders today and handed them over to the legal organs. He said that the captured food was sold to the people at a fixed price. He added that during today's operation by Kabul's Security Commission, 30 butcher shops that were operating in contravention of Kabul municipality's instructions were closed down in Karta-e Se, Taimani, Chardehi, and Qargha areas.

Large Convoy of Fuel, Foodstuffs Arrives in Kabul

LD2701153096 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1430 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A large convoy of foodstuffs and fuel arrived in Kabul today. After the arrival of this convoy, consisting of 500 trucks carrying foodstuffs and fuel, the prices of basic materials have fallen sharply.

The passengers who arrived in Kabul from [word indistinct] said that more convoys are on their way to Kabul. [Passage indistinct]

Taleban Fire Rockets at Kabul; 1 Killed, 5 Wounded

LD2601170796 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1430 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Last night and this morning the Taleban group fired rockets on residential areas of Kabul city. Bakhtar reports that the mercenary Taleban last night and today fired ten rockets on the residential areas of the city, as a result of which one citizen of Kabul was martyred and another five people were wounded.

The firing of rockets takes place at a time when the Islamic State of Afghanistan has declared a unilateral cease-fire in honor of the holy fasting month of Ramadan.

Afghan Opposition Says Taleban Acts Achieve U.S. Aims

LD2601195796 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0230 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] America wants to implement its objectives in Afghanistan by means of the Taleban group.

The point was made in a statement by esteemed Qazi Hussain Ahmad, the amir of Jam'iyat-e Eslami of Pakistan. He added: We do not support any military revolution and do not want to seize power by a short cut.

[Words indistinct] Qazi Hussain Ahmad added: The Taleban group in Afghanistan are being supported by the West. America wants to implement its objectives in Afghanistan by means of the Taleban group.

Kabul Reports on 2 Afghans Arrested in Pakistan

LD2601170496 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1430 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Benazir Bhutto's government has arrested two well-known Afghan personalities. General Safi and Colonel Mir Akbar were recently detained

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one after another in Islamabad and in the Hayatabad area [Peshawar].

Eyewitnesses say that Pakistan's government is constantly following and harassing Afghan refugees. In doing this, they detain and arrest well-known Afghan personalities.

A while ago, General Katawazi and Zadran, two political personalities, and two other women were killed in Peshawar by two unidentified assassins.

The international news agencies reported that the security of Afghan refugees in Naserbagh camp [Peshawar] is at risk. Some of the refugees were either assassinated or have disappeared. For this reason, a large number of the camp's residents have left Naserbagh camp and sought refuge elsewhere.

India

'Heavy Firing' Reported Across Line of Control in Kashmir

BK2701061296 Hong Kong AFP in English 0500 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jammu, India, Jan 27 (AFP) — Indian and Pakistani troops exchanged heavy fire along the Kashmir border Saturday [27 January], a day after Pakistan claimed that an Indian rocket strike on a mosque in Pakistan-held Kashmir killed 18 people.

Eighteen worshippers were killed and 20 injured Friday when two long-range rockets slammed into the border village of Kahuta, near the line dividing Kashmir between India and Pakistan, Pakistani officials said in Islamabad.

A Pakistani defence spokesman said the attack was a "provocation" by India and a "major violation" of the demarcation line in the disputed Himalayan territory.

India denied staging a rocket strike across the border on Friday.

An Indian defence ministry spokesman in New Delhi told the Press Trust of India news agency that the Pakistani claim that Indian troops had fired two rockets was "baseless."

In Srinagar, the summer capital of Indian-administered Kashmir, the state's seniormost army officer also rejected the Pakistani charge.

"We categorically deny our hand in the rocket (attack)," Brigadier P.P.S. Bindra told AFP. "This thing has not happened in our sector. We have no knowledge about the same.

"In fact, there has been no firing on the Line of Control (the LOC, which divides the Indian and Pakistani-held portions of Kashmir) for some time now," he added.

Defence ministry sources in New Delhi said, however, that Indian troops had fired back on Friday after three rockets fired by Pakistani troops crashed into the Poonch sector of Indian Kashmir.

The Pakistani attack caused a scare but no casualties, the sources said.

In Jammu, Kashmir's winter capital, defence officials said "heavy exchanges of firing" were going on between Indian and Pakistani troops at 11 places on the tense and rugged border dividing the disputed state since midnight Friday.

"There is heavy firing," a Border Security Force (BSF) source told AFP. "The Pakistanis are firing non-stop and we are firing at them."

India and Pakistani troops exchange fire almost daily along the winding Kashmir border. The two sides routinely accuse each other of provoking the fighting, which has caused casualties among villagers near the frontier.

Friday's rocket strike came after a senior BSF officer told reporters that Indian border guards gunned down five Pakistani intelligence agents after they crossed into Indian Kashmir.

BSF Inspector General R.S. Mehta said in Jammu that the five infiltrators were killed in an hour-long gunbattle near Bobiya, some 75 kilometers (46 miles) from here, early Friday.

Mehta said Indian troops recovered a map of Jammu city and explosives from the dead men.

New Delhi holds the southern two-thirds of the disputed state, and Islamabad controls the rest, which it refers to as Azad Kashmir (Free Kashmir).

India accuses Pakistan of arming and training Muslim militants waging a separatist drive in the Indian portion of the state which has left more than 12,000 people dead since 1989.

Pakistan denies the charge, but provides moral and diplomatic support to the insurgency. Kashmir is the only Muslim-majority state in Hindu-majority India.

India and Pakistan have fought two of their three wars over Kashmir.

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Reported Rocket Attack Across Kashmir Line of Control Denied

BK2701060296 Delhi All India Radio Network in Hindi 0530 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] India has refuted reports that its troops fired rockets on the Pakistan-held Kashmir area, killing 18 people. A Defense Ministry spokesman in New Delhi described these reports based on Pakistani claims as baseless.

Indian Officer: Exchange With Pakistan 'Nothing To Worry About'

BK2701071996 Hong Kong AFP in English 0705 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Jammu, India, Jan 27 (AFP) — Indian and Pakistani troops exchanged heavy fire along the Kashmir border Saturday, a day after Pakistan claimed that an Indian rocket strike on a mosque in Pakistan-held Kashmir killed 18 people. [passage omitted]

In Jammu, Kashmir's winter capital, defence officials said "heavy exchange of firing" were going on between Indian and Pakistani troops at 11 places on the tense and rugged border dividing the disputed state since midnight Friday.

"There is heavy firing," a Border Security Force (BSF) source told AFP. "The Pakistanis are firing non-stop and we are firing at them."

But an army officer said: "It is nothing to worry about... There is not going to be any war... The Pakistanis may be upset (after the mosque attack). These (firings) are normal." [passage omitted]

'Heavy Unprovoked Firing' by Pakistan Reported

BK2701085096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0838 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistani troops resorted to heavy unprovoked firing in Chak Jugni and Alfa Chak areas of Ranbirsinghpura sector of the international border last night. The firing, which started around 2130 [1600 GMT], continued till this morning. There was no loss of life or property on the Indian side. A BSF [Border Security Force] spokesman told our Jammu correspondent that the apparent aim of the firing was to help militants to sneak into the Indian territory.

Delhi Radio Reports Further on Pakistani 'Firing'

BK2701103196 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1000 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistani troops resorted to heavy unprovoked firing in Chak Jugni and Alfa Chak areas of Ranbirsinghpura sector of the international border last night. The firing, which started around 2130 [1600 GMT], continued till this morning. There was no loss of life or property on the Indian side. A BSF [Border Security Force] spokesman told our Jammu correspondent that the apparent aim of the firing was to help militants to sneak into Indian territory.

Pakistani troops fired two rockets at the border town of Punch yesterday. One of the rockets fell near the dak bungalow [official rest house] and the other in the Punch River.

Indian Border Force Strengthens 'Vigil' Amid Firing Incidents

BK2701125496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistani troops resorted to heavy unprovoked firing in Chak Jugni and Alfa Chak areas of Ranbirsinghpura sector last night. The firing continued till this morning. There was no loss of life or damage to property on the Indian side. A BSF [Border Security Force] spokesman told our Jammu correspondent that the apparent aim of the firing was to help militants sneak into Indian territory. Pakistani troops fired two rockets at the border town of Punch yesterday.

The BSF [Border Security Force] has strengthened the vigil in view of the increased incidents of firing and border crossings at the behest of Pakistani troops.

Kashmir Official Suggests Pakistani Rocket Hit Mosque

BK2701135596 Hong Kong AFP in English 1339 GMT 27 Jan 96

[By Chris Lefkow]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] New Delhi, Jan 27 (AFP) — Indian and Pakistani troops exchanged heavy fire along the disputed Kashmir border on Saturday after Pakistan claimed that Indian rocket strikes on Pakistani-held Kashmir killed more than 20 people.

Indian officials strongly denied staging Friday's rocket attacks, but the incident sent tensions soaring between the two countries which have fought three wars since independence in 1947, two of them over Kashmir.

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Pakistani officials said 20 people died when a rocket slammed into a mosque during Friday prayers in the border village of Kahuta, and another two people were killed by a rocket in Hajira near the border town of Rawalakot. [passage omitted]

In Jammu, the winter capital of Indian Kashmir, a state government spokesman said the rockets may have been fired by the Pakistanis themselves.

"The state government categorically denies Pakistan's charge that Indian troops have fired a rocket on a mosque," the spokesman told AFP.

"For the last several days, Pakistani troops have resorted to indiscriminate firing of rockets and medium machine guns on Indian villages," he said.

"The rocket that hit the mosque may have been one of two fired by Pakistani soldiers at India," the spokesman said. "It missed the target and damaged the mosque."

An Indian defence ministry spokesman in the Indian capital New Delhi also rejected the Pakistani charge, calling it "baseless," as did the senior Indian army officer in India's insurgency-hit Kashmir Valley.

"We categorically deny our hand in the rocket (attack)," Brigadier P.P.S. Bindra told AFP in Srinagar, the summer capital of Indian Kashmir. "This thing has not happened in our sector.

"In fact, there has been no firing on the Line of Control (LOC, which divides Indian and Pakistani-held portions of Kashmir) for some time now," Bindra said.

Defence ministry sources in New Delhi said, however, that Indian troops had fired back on Friday after three rockets fired by Pakistani troops crashed into the Punch district of Indian Kashmir.

The Pakistani attack did not cause any casualties, the sources said. [passage omitted]

'Heavy' Pakistani Fire Injures 7 Civilians in Kashmir

BK2801074396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, seven civilians were injured in unprovoked heavy firing by Pakistani troops on Indian villages in Akhnur sector yesterday. A BSF [Border Security Force] spokesman told AIR Jammu correspondent this morning that the Pakistani troops have been indulging in unprovoked heavy firing for the last one week. Casualties were reported yesterday from the villages of Maljoda, Nikowal, Jamunbela, Brahmanbela, and Chak Phagwari. One Pakistani intruder was killed last night near Suchitgarh in Ranbirsinghpura sector. The spokesman said that the aim of Pakistani firing is to provide cover to the intruders and militants.

Villagers Said To Flee Kashmir Border Amid 'Heavy Fire'

BK2801075796 Hong Kong AFP in English 0741 GMT 28 Jan 96

[By Ashwani Kumar]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Jammu, India, Jan 28 (AFP) — Hundreds of Muslim villagers fled the Kashmir border on Sunday as Indian and Pakistani troops exchanged heavy fire for the second day running following a rocket strike on a Pakistani mosque.

Indian officials said in this winter capital of Indian Kashmir that some 45 Muslim families, or about 250 people, living near the border had taken shelter in interior villages to escape the skirmishing along the frontier.

"It is the first wave" of migration from the fighting, a government official told AFP. He said the refugees were from six small villages around Akhnoor, 65 kilometers (40 miles) west of here.

They started to move out after seven villagers were wounded by Pakistani firing overnight, the official added.

Indian defence sources said Indian and Pakistani troops exchanged heavy machine gun fire from midnight to dawn on Sunday at seven places along the rugged frontier that divides Indian- and Pakistani-held Kashmir.

An army officer said the heaviest firing was in the border area of Chicken Neck, so called because of its shape, which was the scene of bloody tank battles in 1965 during the second of three wars between India and Pakistan.

"Heavy firing has been going on throughout the night," the officer said. "But none of our men has been killed or injured."

"The Pakistanis are trying to create civilian casualties," the officer said. "They fired thousands of rounds, and we fired back."

He said the firing lasted for several hours and stopped at first light.

Artillery had not been used by either side, the officer said.

Indian and Pakistani troops exchange fire daily on the Kashmir border, but the fighting escalated after two rockets slammed into a mosque in the village of

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Kahuta in Pakistani-held Kashmir on Friday, killing 20 worshippers.

Both India and Pakistan have accused each other of staging the attack, but have stressed that there is little risk of the escalation in tension leading to a wider conflict.

Pakistani officials said the rocket was fired by Indian troops, while Indian officials said the mosque was accidentally hit by a rocket fired by Pakistani soldiers in a bid to disrupt Republic Day celebrations in India on Friday.

Indian authorities accuse Pakistani troops of providing covering fire for (?Muslim) militants attempting to cross the border into Indian Kashmir, where a bloody separatist campaign has left more than 12,000 people dead since 1989. [passage omitted]

Indian Army Spokesman: Skirmishing With Pakistan 'Abated'

BK2801124196 Hong Kong AFP in English 1231 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Jammu, India, Jan 28 (AFP) — Indian and Pakistani troops exchanged heavy fire along the Kashmir border for the second day Sunday following a rocket strike on a Pakistani mosque but the intensity of the fighting died down later.

Army spokesman Narinder Singh Salathia told AFP in the state winter capital Jammu that cross-border hostilities had abated by late Sunday except in the border area of Chicken Neck, so called because of its shape.

Chicken Neck was the scene of bloody tank battles in 1965 during the second of three wars between arch rivals India and Pakistan.

"Indian and Pakistani troops have stopped firing at each other, excepting in Mallu Nakwal (some 80 kilometres (50 miles) from Jammu) in the Chicken Neck area," Salathia said.

"A very tight vigil is being maintained in all areas as the Pakistanis are using automatic weapons," he said. "They are indulging in unprovoked firing to push in armed militants.

"Troops are on high alert. We expect it (the fighting) to resume at night." [passage omitted]

In Srinagar, the Kashmir summer capital, the state's chief Muslim cleric Umer Farooq appealed for UN intervention, saying the firing could lead to a bloody battle.

"The small skirmishes can any time lead to a full-scale battle," he said. "And this time it will be nuclear war... the UN has a role and it should play that now." A small UN team is stationed in both parts of the disputed border to monitor the area. [passage omitted]

The Coordinational Committee of Kashmiri Militants on Sunday called for a general strike across Kashmir, India's only Muslim- majority province, to denounce the "Indian army attack" on the mosque. [passage omitted]

Indian, Pakistani Troops Trade 'Sporadic Fire'; Tension 'Easing'

BK2901123496 Hong Kong AFP in English 1215 GMT 29 Jan 96

[By Chris Lefkow]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, Jan 29 (AFP) — Indian and Pakistani troops traded sporadic fire along the Kashmir border for a fourth day Monday, but both sides said tensions were easing and dismissed fears of an escalation of the conflict.

"The border is calm except for a little bit of routine firing," Brigadier P.P.S. Bindra, the chief of army operations in Indian Kashmir, told AFP in Srinagar, the summer capital of the strife-torn northern Himalayan state.

"We are prepared if Pakistan mounts a big offensive," the army officer said. "Our state of preparedness is always at its highest pitch.

"But there is no indication that the skirmishes on the border will lead to war," he added.

An Indian defense spokesman in Jammu, the winter capital of Indian Kashmir, said Indian troops in forward positions remained on "high alert" but stressed they were "exercising restraint."

In Islamabad, a senior Pakistani army officer said tension had decreased and described the situation as "normal" along a border where firing incidents are a near-daily occurrence.

Tension flared along the demarcation line separating the Indian and Pakistani-held portions of Kashmir on Friday after a rocket slammed into a mosque in the Pakistani border village of Kahuta, killing 20 worshippers.

Pakistan accused Indian troops of firing the rocket while Indian officials said the mosque was accidentally hit by a rocket fired by Pakistani soldiers in an attempt to disrupt India's Republic Day celebrations on Friday.

Indian defense sources in Jammu said Indian and Pakistani troops at four observation posts exchanged

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sporadic machine gun fire during the night. They said the firing ended around dawn and resumed a couple of hours later.

Pickets at Mallu, Rajpura, Fagwari and Dewara in the Akhnoor area, some 80 kilometers (50 miles) northwest of Jammu, came under attack during the night and Indian troops retaliated, the sources said.

The firing was limited to machine guns and artillery, rockets or mortars were not used by either side, they said. No casualties were reported.

Pakistani Rangers fired a total of some 15,000 rounds at Indian positions during the night, less than in previous days, the sources said.

Brigadier Bindra said the "unprovoked" Pakistani firing was an attempt to provide cover to groups of Muslim separatist militants trying to sneak across the border into Indian Kashmir.

New Delhi accuses Islamabad of arming and training Muslim militants waging a violent separatist campaign in the Indian-administered portion of the divided state which has left more than 12,000 people dead since 1989.

Pakistan denies the allegations but extends moral and diplomatic support to what it describes as a legitimate campaign for self-determination by the Muslim majority population of Indian Kashmir.

The firing over the weekend left seven villagers wounded on the Indian side, according to Indian officials, and about 250 residents of border villages have fled their homes to escape the fighting.

Pakistan and Indian leaders have both downplayed the risks of the border clashes escalating into a full-fledged war between the two nuclear-capable countries.

"There is no threat of war between Pakistan and India," Pakistani President Farooq Ahmad Leghari said Sunday before a reported meeting with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and army chief Jehangir Karamat to discuss the border situation.

He added that Islamabad would "respond to consistent acts of unprovoked firing by the Indian side."

India and Pakistan have fought three wars since independence from Britain in 1947, two of them over Kashmir, whose ownership is claimed by both nations.

India controls two-thirds of Kashmir while Pakistan controls the rest.

The traditionally tense relations between the two South Asian rivals were exacerbated over the weekend by a test by India of a mobile surface-to-surface missile capable of carrying a one-tonne conventional or nuclear warhead.

Pakistani President Leghari said his country would take "appropriate measures" to counter the threat posed by the Prithvi missile, which was successfully tested by India on Saturday.

Indian Border Forces Kill 5 'Pakistani Intruders' in Kashmir

BK2601130096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, five Pakistani intruders were killed in an encounter with the security forces at Budiyan village in Hiranagar sector today. A BSF [Border Security Force] spokesman told the AIR Jammu correspondent that the encounter took place when movement of the intruders was noticed by a BSF patrol party around 0330. The intruders were asked to surrender but they opened fire. The BSF returned the fire killing five intruders while some others managed to escape. Fourteen packets of explosives and a map of Jammu city were recovered.

Test Firing of 'Longer Version' of India's Prithvi Expected

BK2701093096 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 0840 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A longer version of the indigenously developed surface-to-surface Prithvi missile is scheduled to be test fired today. A series of checks of the subsystems were carried out at the interim test range in Chandipur-at-Sea in Orissa.

Prithvi has successfully completed test-firing of the 150 km range version.

'Extended Version' of India's Prithvi 'Successfully' Test Fired

BK2701114996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1135 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The extended version of the surface-to-surface missile Prithvi was successfully test fired today from the interim test range of Chandipur-on-Sea in Orissa. A Defense Ministry spokesman said in New Delhi today that the 250 km version of the indigenously-developed missile system blasted off in perfect weather conditions at 1422 [0852 GMT] this afternoon. The 150 km range version of the missile had already undergone user trials successfully.

Today's test flight was the 15th in the series by the Defense Research and Development Organization. The

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first trial was held in February 1988 from the Rocket Launching Center at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.

Successful Test of India's Prithvi Missile Hailed

BK2701165996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The indigenously-developed long-range missile Prithvi was successfully flight tested today at 1425 [0855 GMT] from the interim test range at Chandipur-on-Sea in Orissa. A Defense Ministry spokesman said in New Delhi today that all the main objectives of the flight were fully met. This flight heralds an important milestone for the Prithvi program of the nation's integrated guided missile development program and marks the successful achievement of 250 km range. The extended version of Prithvi is being developed by the Indian Air Force. Prithvi-1, with a range of 150 km, has already been successfully developed for the Indian Army. Our correspondent M. Bhadra Nair has more details:

[Begin Nair recording] This year has been a golden year for the Indian defense scientists and engineers. First the main battle tank Arjun, which had undergone all user trials, has been passed on to the production lines. Close on the heels comes the successful test flight of the (?Air Force) version of Prithvi, with a range of 250 km. Powered by a liquid propellant, Prithvi is the one of the five missile systems being developed in the country. It has the latest on-board computer and an advanced inertia and navigation system. Unlike the Russian Scud missile, which follows pure ballistic projector, Prithvi's flight is controlled by the on-board computer. The successful completion of Prithvi mission is yet another feather on the cap of the father of Indian missile technology, Dr. Abdul Kalam. [end recording]

The prime minister has congratulated the scientists of the Defense Research and Development Organization [DRDO] for the successful launch of Prithvi missile. In a message, he said it will help ensure the nation's security. Senior officials of the Army, Air Force, and scientists and engineers of the DRDO participated in today's historic campaign, which was a thrilling experience for the Indian scientific community.

Describing the flight test, the secretary of the DRDO and the scientific adviser to the defense minister, Mr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, said it was an excellent flight following the predicted trajectory in a textbook manner and the Prithvi impacted at the exact point.

Iran

Iranian Official Says Oil Deals Frustrate U.S. Ambitions

LD2701202696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1930 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Islamic Republic of Iran, by signing various contract with foreign oil companies for investment in Iranian oil project, has managed to frustrate the United States' trade embargo.

The head of the international section of Iran's Oil Ministry in an interview with Britain's Petroleum Argus periodical said Iran has made considerable headway in negotiations with some overseas oil firms to carry out 11 national oil and gas projects.

Meanwhile, in addition to signing several bilateral agreements with various countries, Tehran has launched an all out effort to attract foreign oil company investment in Iran's oil sector.

Tehran Radio Reports Bahrain Situation Tense, More People Detained

NC2601190596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Bahrain's Freemen Movement [BFM], led by Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir al-Jamri, has announced that the situation in Bahrain is still tense and government forces continue to detain and persecute the Bahraini people.

Reports from Manama indicate that early today the security forces took stringent security measures around the mosques and in the areas which are strongholds of the opposition.

Meanwhile, a police source in Bahrain has stated that several opposition figures have been detained and that the number of detainees is now 554. However, the BFM said that the number of detainees exceeds 2,000.

Tehran Newspaper Cites Reports on Bahraini Disturbances

NC2701080896 Tehran SALAM in Persian 23 Jan 96 p 1

[From the Foreign News Desk]

[FBIS Translated Text] While reports from the littoral states of the Persian Gulf indicate that most of the shaykhdoms have accepted U.S. military units on their soil in order to combat internal unrest, the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] issued a statement announcing the GCC members readiness to jointly combat the unrest in Bahrain.

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According to an Associated Press report from Manama, Bahrain's allies in the GCC have promised to support all efforts to quell the latest wave of political unrest and have announced that they would be ready to intervene and assist if necessary.

According to IRNA, the Saudi Press Agency disseminated a statement on Sunday [21 January] issued by the governments of Riyadh, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates [UAE], Oman, and Qatar on this. The statement endorsed the decisions approved by the GCC in previous sessions saying that the GCC members are determined to collectively combat all acts of violence and terrorist and subversive activities.

On the other hand, the official Gulf News Agency stated on Sunday in Bahrain that the shaykhdom's security forces have intensified their efforts against what the news agency described as "an arsonist plot supported from abroad."

According to the German news agency from Manama, the Gulf News Agency cited an unidentified source in the Bahraini Interior Ministry as saying: The security forces have been stationed in various parts of the shaykhdom as part of the measures to quell the unrest of the past three days.

According to this report, some people have been arrested but exact figures are not available. The Gulf News Agency states that on Saturday evening alone, 25 cases of fire were reported in which two automobiles, one shop, and some smaller power stations were set ablaze.

Commentary Denies Iran's Involvement in Bahrain Events

LD2601165496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1530 GMT 26 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The U.S. under-secretary of state, Robert Pelletreau, in a speech in the Democrat's National Women's Club, pointed out: Iran is encouraging and aiding the rebels in Bahrain. Such accusation is in fact in line with U.S. policies in the region. The U.S. is accusing Iran of involvement in the internal affairs of [the] Persian Gulf states to encourage the regional states to purchase more weapons. At the same time the U.S. will pave the grounds for wider military presence in the Persian Gulf area.

America, which has a military base in Bahrain, has recently realized that the people demand political reforms within the constitution and with no unreasonable objective. Now that the U.S. evaluates Bahraini people's demand contrary to her interests in the region, it forgets its deceitful call for democracy and justifies the suppression of the people's uprising by accusing Iran of involvement in the event. Mr. Pelletreau's backing for the Bahraini officials' reaction to the recent uprising does not mean that the U.S. is sympathizing with the government in Bahrain nor does it indicate U.S. concern for the state of democracy. In fact the U.S. regards Bahrain as her best ally in the region but if necessary America will adopt the same strategy it employed towards the former Emir of Qatar.

Political analysts believe that Islamic Republic of Iran has in words and deeds proven that she desires friendly relations with regional countries. Iran condemns interference in other countries' affairs, the interference that will destabilize the region. Hence, Pelletreau's speech only unveils the dominant and interventionist nature of American policy in the region. Such policy is definitely understood by the officials in Bahrain who do not seem to take such propaganda seriously.

Iranian News Agency Refutes Bahraini Papers' Allegations of Provocation

LD2801115996 Tehran IRNA in English 1113 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 28, IRNA — In line with the Bahraini Government's futile policy of distorting the causes of unrest in that country, Bahraini media recently charged Iran with escalating the recent unrest and riots in the shaykhdom.

The editorial of the Bahraini official daily 'AL-AYAM' alleged that Iranian media have targeted the Bahraini enthusiastic youth, provoking them to do things which are not in the interests of their country and people.

Another Bahraini official daily 'AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ' wrote, "we were hoping that Iranian media would listen to the voice of logic and refrain from causing riots and unrest in a country that has done nothing except respecting Iran."

Those official Bahraini newspapers have apparently forgotten that, by launching baseless allegations against Iran last Sunday claiming that those responsible for the disturbances in the shaykhdom have received their orders from Qom, they themselves took the first step in waging war of words.

The Bahraini Government, which always at the time of facing internal crises resorts to accusing the Shiite Muslims in the Persian Gulf states of causing the unrest, is repeating its unfounded allegations so as to find a way out of its awkward predicament, which has been created by its wrong domestic policies and is undermining its rule.

The Iranian media, quoting foreign sources, have again reported impartially the accounts of the disturbances

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in the shaykhdom, which for the first time have been accompanied with explosions and arson.

Political observers believe that the attempts by the Bahraini Government to accuse Iran of involvement in the recent widespread riots in that country, are aimed at portraying Bahraini people's opposition and discontent as a religious and sectarian movement in order to underrate its dimensions and suppress it more easily.

Tehran Paper Describes Bahraini, Other Gulf States 'Vulnerabilities'

NC2701083896 Tehran SALAM in Persian 23 Jan 96 p 12

[Unattributed commentary: "The Misconceptions of the Bahraini Authorities"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the escalation of a wave of internal unrest and discontent in the shaykhdom of Bahrain and the arrests of scores of protesters, some officials in the al-Khalifah government—in unison with the country's domestic media and the foreign media—have made some rather immature allegations against Iran as the cause of the unrest. They have stated that the source of the unrest was the Iranian city of Qom.

Certain points of this crude and thoughtless stance merit attention: First, Iran is being accused of interference in popular domestic protests against the al-Khalifah government at a time when Iranian officials, including the foreign minister and deputy foreign minister, have stressed Tehran's policy of non-interference regarding the recent disturbances in Bahrain and have expressed their goodwill about removing such misconceptions during their recent visits to Kuwait and Manama.

There is no doubt that in view of Tehran's stands the Bahraini authorities' remarks can be considered as abuse of the restraint and goodwill we displayed in regional relations.

On the other hand, the implied agreement of all the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] countries with the baseless allegations of the al-Khalifah government and their expression of willingness to collectively combat the internal unrest in Bahrain is being set forth at a time when it appears that their real objective is to divert public opinion in their respective counties from their own rampant disarray and problems. An example of this can be seen in the recent explosion in Riyadh. Everyone knows that Saudi Arabia and all the other regional governments are facing the same problems and their main fear is the eruption of domestic unrest. Therefore it may be said: "Physician, heal thyself!"

In other words, the internal unrest that has surfaced in the past few years in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia has indicated that suppressing the people and attributing their rightful struggles to foreign connections have not proved successful. On the other hand, asking for assistance in the form of U.S. forces, warships, and aircraft will not protect their Bedouin political systems from their people's fury even if the bases of the U.S. fleet are in the center of their capitals.

Ultimately, the only way to end these problems and the people's protests in these countries is to pay attention to their legitimate and rightful demands, which are for the most basic rights, such as freedom of expression and the freedom to vote. At times, even the right to travel abroad or contact foreigners seems to have been prohibited.

Those who believe that they can rid themselves of problems by blaming others and thus elicit U.S. help to reduce their vulnerabilities should know that neither the Americans nor the other foreigners will be able to protect them against popular protests. With such preparations, they will not be able to disrupt the security of a country [Iran] that is 2000 times larger than theirs!

Tehran Welcomes Saudi Proposal on Saudi-Iranian Relations

LD2801184896 Tehran IRNA in English 1734 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 28, IRNA — Foreign Ministry Spokesman, Mahmud Mohammadi welcomed the proposal of the Defence Minister of the Saudi Arabia, Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Sa'ud for building the best relations between Tehran and Riyadh.

He said, "relations between Iran and the Saudi Arabia is excellent and we are working very closely in the organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) on issues concerning Bosnia-Herzegovina. we regard cooperation between the Islamic states to be in the interest of the Persian Gulf region."

Referring to the missile attack upon a Muslim mosque in the village of Kahuta in Kashmir during Friday congregational prayer when 20 worshippers died and several other wounded, Mohammadi said Iran strongly condemned such attacks against the people who were observing their fast in the holy month of Ramadan.

He said, "considering the fact that Indian officials have rejected the attack, we hope that they seriously follow up the case do all the necessary investigation in this regard and punish those involved in the missile attack in a bid to stop the outbreak of unrest and hostility between the neighbouring states."

On the current visit to Tehran of President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda to Tehran, Mohammadi

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said he will hold talks with President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

On the topics in the meeting of the two presidents, he said since the Islamic Republic of Iran supports removal of differences among the Third World countries, non-aligned countries and the Islamic states, the two presidents would discuss the dispute between Uganda and Sudan.

He hoped that an appropriate ground would be prepared in Tehran for resolving Uganda-Sudan problem.

On the U.S. accusation against Iran about printing fake dollar bills, the Foreign Ministry spokesman said the U.S. has attempted to tarnish the image of the Islamic Republic and harm the prestige of the Islamic Republic with its trade partners.

He said the U.S. propaganda on the allocation of a dlrs. 20 million budget for subversive activities did not affect the world opinion and Iranian trade partners, adding that it however indicated escalation of Washington's psychological warfare against Iran through the spread of rumors and unfounded allegations.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman categorically rejected any link with the issue of the controversy raised by certain news and security sources in Turkey claiming the trucks seized in Turkey last week were loaded in Iran with military equipment.

Mohammadi said, "we formally gave proposal to Turkey to form an a joint inquiry commission to probe into the case meticulously, because the matter seems suspicious to us and since we have friendly relations and security cooperation with Turkey, we could investigate the issue minutely and critically."

Tehran Daily Sees 'New Chapter' in Relations With Saudi Arabia

LD2701080796 Tehran IRNA in English 0742 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 27, IRNA — Commenting on the recent remarks made by Saudi Second Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-Al-'Aziz the English-language daily 'IRAN NEWS' in its editorial on Saturday [27 January] said that a new chapter may be opening in Irano-Saudi relations.

The Saudi defense minister told the AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT newspaper that Iran and Saudi Arabia are the two most significant Muslim countries in the region and both like to maintain amiable and friendly relations with one another.

The Saudi minister added that despite the Shiite-Sunni difference, the peoples of Iran and Saudi Arabi are united through their basic islamic beliefs.

"Analysts of Irano-Saudi relations confirm that religious and cultural differences between Tehran and Riyadh have never caused political tension between the two countries. But records show that since oil became the main player in international relations, foreign elements tried to prevent the most important oil producers in the region from establishing cordial relations," said the editorial.

The editorial criticized Riyadh's policy towards Tehran in the past and for having neglected Tehran's "fair, just, and generous stance" during the Iraqi offensive against Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Iran news concluded by saying that Tehran, due to its firm belief that Persian Gulf security must be maintained through regional cooperation far from any foreign interference, is always ready to host the Saudi Foreign minister and resolve the existing differences and misunderstandings between the two countries.

Iranian Foreign Ministry Official on Normalizing Ties With Iraq

LD2901121396 Tehran IRNA in English 1051 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 29, IRNA — The problem hindering normalization of Tehran-Baghdad relations is a lack of confidence between Iran and Iraq, but the fact that both countries share common history, religion and culture provide good grounds for promotion of good neighborly relations, a Foreign Ministry official said.

The two old foes have still not signed a peace treaty although Iraq's Saddam Husayn has re-accepted the 1975 border treaty, said 'Ali Khorram, advisor to Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, in an interview with the English daily 'KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL' on Monday [29 January].

With Iraq forgetting its commitments, unilaterally declaring the said treaty as null and void and attacking Iran, the Islamic Republic cannot have very much confidence in Iraqi leaders, he stressed.

"They can create confidence by fully implementing the 1975 Iran- Iraq good neighborly border treaty, which they have re-accepted in words. Now we want them to do so in action," Khorram reiterated.

Commenting on Iran's national security policy, he said we should have normal and friendly relations with Iraq,

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especially as the Iraqi nation is suffering from the economic sanctions.

However, he cautioned, "we are not certain if Iraq is after genuine friendly relations with Iran and we cannot be sure that as soon as the U.N. sanctions are lifted, Iraq will not go back to its ambitious and expansionist policies."

Baghdad's publicized desire for improved relations with Tehran is primarily a tactical move to provoke the West to lift the sanctions, he underscored.

Regarding the postponement of Velayati's trip to Baghdad on several occasions, Khorram stressed the visit would only take place when the no-war, no-peace situation comes to an end. Such a state would cease to exist when the two sides officially announce that hostilities of the two countries have come to an absolute end and normal relations are established, he said.

On the partition of Iraq, he stressed that Iran is totally opposed to this scenario, adding that, "we do not interfere in Iraq's internal affairs and we expect others to do the same. Iraq's fate should be determined by the Iraqi people themselves."

Asked if presence of the outlawed terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) in Iraq is an obstacle on the way of Tehran- Baghdad rapprochement, Khorram noted that the MKO is not an important factor in Iran's relations with Iraq.

"The Iraqis themselves do not take them as an important factor in the relations between the two countries. Because the Iraqis know that the MKO Is not popular in Iran and is hated by Iranians from all walks of life. Baghdad also knows that the group does not even enjoy legitimacy among the Iranian opposition groups abroad," KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL quoted him as saying.

"However, Iraq will use them as a pawn as long as Tehran-Baghdad relations are not normalized. When rapprochement comes the group's life will come to an end," he concluded.

Rafsanjani Demands Electoral Impartiality From Officials

LD2801100296 Tehran IRNA in English 0743 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan 28 (IRNA) — President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani here Saturday [27 January] night stressed that expressing different viewpoints regarding the forthcoming majles elections should not harm the unity that exists among various groups and upset the healthy atmosphere prevailing over the society.

Addressing a group of high-ranking officials of government organizations and deputy ministers, the president made it clear that he will remain impartial during the March 8 elections for the 270-seat majles and asked all government officials to do the same.

The president told the visitors that although he himself is a member of Jame' Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez-e (JRM) [Militant Clergy Association] of Tehran, and in the light of the fact that a group of his trusted colleagues may come up with a different list of candidates for the elections, he will maintain his impartiality. "I will exercise my right and express my view when casting my ballot," the president stressed. President Rafsanjani further added that the recent emergence of a group which has come to be known as the "Kargozaran-e Sazandegi [Reconstruction Officials]," should not be considered as a split or a new faction.

On general conditions of the country, the president said that with the imminent completion of numerous infrastructural and development projects in the areas of steel, copper, aluminum, zinc, and lead, as well as the building of oil and gas refineries, the country's need for foreign currency will be reduced in the next Iranian year.

New economic policies have been successful in controlling the inflation and the economic prospects for next year are more promising with a lower rate of inflation, the president added.

He said that in order to provide and meet the needs of the people, the export of certain items has been reduced or stopped in certain cases.

Khamene'i Warns Against Tension in Pre-Election Period

LD2701220796 Tehran IRNA in English 2109 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 27, IRNA — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i in response to a letter by sixteen senior officials written today in relation to the forthcoming parliamentary elections, said that everyone is duty-bound to avoid whatever that leads to annoyance and tension.

The leader noting the growth in the stature of the Majles over the years, expressed confidence that the Islamic consultative assembly will be able to achieve further progress in its upcoming fifth four-year term.

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"Reliance on a particular term will not be counted as an insult to the Majles or its next terms," replied the leader adding, that under the circumstances the brave Iranian nation is all set to display its active presence at the scene of the elections, "everyone is duty-bound to refrain from whatever that causes annoyance and tension of ideas."

The letter which was written by signatories of the joint public statement of January 18, had requested the leader to express his guidelines regarding their activities for the parliamentary polls, and had also drawn attention to the critical reaction their statement [words indistinct] members of the Majles.

The 16 signatories [passage indistinct].

Former Majles Deputy Speaker Bayat on Iran's Elections

NC2901084096 Tehran SALAM in Persian 13 Jan 96 pp 4, 9

[First installment of a two-part interview with Qom Seminary instructor Hojjat ol-Eslam Asadollah Bayat, member of the Tehran Militant Clerics, former Majles deputy speaker, and former head of the Islamic Society of Narmak, by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [SALAM] Thank you for giving us some of your time. Can you assess the general situation surrounding elections for the fifth Majles term?

[Bayat] In the name of God, the almighty and merciful. The elections can be seen from various angles. One is that of ideology and belief, as the Iranian people are Muslims and believe in the Islamic Revolution. They also accept his eminence the imam, may his soul be sanctified, as their dear source of emulation, therefore they heed all the points he emphasized. The people are committed to the Islamic Revolution and to the religious laws governing it.

Those who consider these things have a positive approach to the elections.

The other issue can be summed up in the question: Is it enough to refer to the people's beliefs to encourage them to take to the streets and go to the polling stations? Can these beliefs create enough enthusiasm to encourage them to attend?

I believe our ideological and social analyses show that this is not the case. The people should put their extremely profound beliefs into action and vote for those candidates who are acceptable to society. They should vote for the people they trust because the deputies are the people, but in another atmosphere, in one where votes are cast, opinions are voiced, and political, economic, social, and cultural issues are studied. [passage omitted]

Another significant issue is the position of the Majles. The Majles represents the people's vote; it is society in a microcosm. The Majles represents the country. If the Majles enjoys such a position, its deputies should possess particular qualities.

Politically, a deputy should see things as long- and short-term issues. When you see plans such as the First and Second [Development] Plans being ineffective, not having the necessary outcomes, or causing chaos in society, it is because their planners did not have long-term programs. Socially, candidates should be worthy of the people's vote; a deputy is not a disposable product. A deputy should become stronger and more competent with experience. A deputy should not be someone the people will regret sending to the Majles. This is why candidates should be well known, sufficiently versed in domestic and foreign policies, informed, and brave. A deputy should consider the people's interests more important than his own, and the government's interests more important, because the government serves the people. One of the duties of a deputy is to select a government and the executive body of the system. The government is not the guardian of the people. The government is the servant of the people. Thus, the people are the main basis. A deputy should be brave, and when differences arise between the people's interests and those of the government, the deputy should always consider the people's interests. More important still is that being a deputy is an instrument and a means, not an objective. [passage omitted]

[SALAM] How do you see a deputy's freedom-loving nature?

[Bayat] A more important issue is that of the people and freedom. Along with ideological roots, people's freedom should also be considered. The word freedom is misunderstood, both by its supporters and its enemies, because its enemies oppose truth and are against values, and because its friends do not appreciate this priceless "pearl," which they interpret wrongly. I believe freedom is the infrastructure of human rights. [passage omitted]

I believe freedom is best demonstrated when the government and rule pave the way for correct thinking, free thinking, and for the members of a society to judge things correctly. The rule and the government should not create obstacles to stop the people thinking correctly and stop them identifying the progressive people in a society. The directed freedom that some people advocate is wrong. God gave us freedom. If a limit is to be set it must be set by God, not human beings. The best sign of freedom is thought, which has no limits in

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Islam. Islam sets no limits on people's thinking. Man has the right to think even about the highest and most important issues, about God himself. But thought has its own specific mechanism. Man should use a specific mechanism in each place. If freedom means that the people understand, that they are not counted out, and that they consider themselves to be determining factors who appoint the leader, the president, and the experts, and bring them to power, then these are signs of freedom. If such an atmosphere exists, the people will enjoy wholesome participation in the elections. But if this atmosphere is absent, slogans alone are not enough. Slogans can be used to rouse feelings of responsibility. But slogans cannot specify how the people should vote and cannot make the people participate enthusiastically. [passage omitted]

[SALAM] Some people have been trying to resurrect, in a new way, the issues of the system's republican and Islamic characteristics and thus downplay the significance of the people's vote. Do you think you can measure the extent of a system's republic or Islamic nature? How can you propound Islamism without overshadowing the people's vote and without harming the principle of republican rule?

[Bayat] Your question is basic. It would have been good if the newspapers and their proprietors had the courage—thank God, some of them do—to bring a group of university and seminary academicians together to discuss this topic so that the issue might be resolved and clarified for the people.

The system has two dimensions. One dimension is its form and the second is its content. Republican rule is an issue of form and Islamism an issue of content. God rest the soul of our great scholar, the martyr Motahhari, who was much better versed in this issue. [passage omitted]

As for the elections, the gentlemen involved are confused about form and content. The role of the people is the primary issue. What are these gentlemen saying? The people voted for the Islamism of the system on 12 Farvardin 1358 [1 April 1979]. They have not changed their minds. Do the people doubt the Islamism of the system today? Why are you insulting the people? What we are discussing is the content and the people who form the content. I would like to have a scholarly talk with these gentlemen. The issue now is that the people vote or do not vote for one person or the other. If I vote for one person and do not vote for the other, what does this have to do with Islamism? What are they talking about? Why do you confuse form with content? I accept one person and vote for him and I reject the other and do not vote for him. Does this mean I have doubts about Islamism? What does this have to do with Islamism? If I believe someone has strong managerial capabilities, understands politics, and can see where the wrong is and fight it, why is it wrong for me to vote for him? This person may not say his prayers at night, but he performs his duties. By voting for him, will I have expressed my opposition to Islamism?

Form is something that the law delineates. I believe the Constitution has set up a specific mechanism for the people's presence, the people's vote, and for the people's election. Those who find faults in the Constitution or propound their own views are the people whose Islamism should be doubted. They should identify the framework they are using to communicate. Are Islamism and the Constitution not frameworks? People who walk in the path of Islamism and the Constitution are people whose Islamic character and popular nature have been proven. When this is so, why should we say there is a difference between Islamism and the people's path? Did the imam, who was the founder of the revolution, not clearly say that the people's vote is the criterion? Did the imam not say the Majles is at the forefront of affairs? Did the imam speak about the bricks and glass used to build the Majles building? The imam said the Majles is a little nation. Did the imam not state during the revision of the Constitution that the experts are chosen by the people and that these experts, in turn, choose other people whose decisions should be obeyed? Did he not say that the guardian of the Muslim cause must be obeyed because the people brought him to power? The people count. As for the content of the system, it is determined by the people in general. If the experts and mojtaheds [doctors of theoretical law] determine something to be Islamism, there is no arguing this. [passage omitted]

Many articles of the Constitution stress the Islamism of the system and the establishment of an imamate. The Constitution guarantees the legitimacy of the system, and the people have accepted it. They have accepted the principle of legitimacy and from now on the people will express their views on officials. Only the people have the first and last say.

[SALAM] Something else being propounded in relation to the elections is practical obligation. It seems there is some sort of general agreement among the various factions. But the problem is that there is no specific practical interpretation. Some even believe that there are grounds for interpreting this by a vote. How can this possible interpretation by a vote be prevented? How can practical duty be performed?

[Bayat] I accept your comment. After all, I was involved in legislation for years. But there are points I should mention here, some of which can act as deterrents, while

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others can act as instruments for checks and balances. There are also problems that cannot be ignored.

If the law is clear and flexible, something the Majles has discussed often, it will act as a deterrent. The legislator should approve a bill in such a way that it cannot be misinterpreted. Efforts to promote unskilled people to the Majles would lead to ambiguous laws, because such people do not know legal terms and have not worked in law. [passage omitted]

The other area is interpretation of the law, which should be done by those approving the law. [passage omitted] Deputies may make fewer mistakes, because they are the ones working on a law. Furthermore, a detailed record of Majles discussions and debates on these laws is available. It is also correct in theory for the legislator to interpret the law.

[SALAM] The same thing has been stated in the Constitution concerning ordinary law and its interpretation, which has been assigned to the Majles.

[Bayat] Well said. This is exactly what I am talking about. This is why the Constitution states that the Majles should interpret ordinary laws. [passage omitted]

The press should work on this; it should be clarified that neither the executive body nor the Council of Guardians has the right to interpret such things by a vote. If there is any doubt, the Majles should be asked to clarify things, because only the Council of Guardians can interpret the Constitution. As for ordinary laws, the esteemed members of the Council of Guardians have no right to interpret them.

[SALAM] What about supervision by the Council of Guardians and its field?

[Bayat] Another problem is that the Council of Guardians has been assigned the task of supervision, not of implementation. The philosophy behind this is that doubts are created in implementation, not in supervision. Perhaps this decision stems from the executive body not allowing itself to impose its views; if it does there must be a supervisor to issue the necessary warning. But when the Council of Guardians, as a supervisor, interprets things, it creates problems, because the Council of Guardians starts seeing that it should issue the final approval. Approval by the Council of Guardians is now virtually more important than implementation. Even if the people have voted correctly, it is the Council of Guardians that must decide if the people's choice is right or wrong.

Many problems will be solved if those who compose and approve terms are unambiguous. And the same people who compose these things, that is, the Majles, should be allowed to interpret them. [passage omitted]

Problems stem from the Council of Guardians' role of supervision. They have assumed the position of God's successor. They consider themselves the guardians of the people. [passage omitted]

I hope the respected members of the Council of Guardians will, God willing, realize this and observe Islamic and jurisprudential principles, not the principle "I think."

Mashhad Majles Deputy Assesses Upcoming Elections

NC2801132596 Tehran SALAM in Persian 21 Jan 96 p 9

[From the Political Desk]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Seyyed Hoseyn Fattahi, Islamic Majles deputy from Mashhad, spoke to our correspondent regarding the Fifth Majles elections.

Asked his assessment of the situation on the eve of the Fifth Majles elections, Fattahi said: The conditions for the current elections are similar to those in previous rounds; in fact, they are even better.

He added: The elections to the Fourth Majles were influenced by the conditions resulting from the end of the war and the loss of the great leader of the Islamic Revolution. The issues at that time require a more detailed analysis and have been explained in the press. However, the people's participation was far greater, especially in the districts.

Now we must prepare for the elections in which committed Muslim forces with the necessary experience and specialization will participate. We should not raise issues that will generate rumors that instill pessimism and despondency among the sincere and efficient forces of our system.

Asked what measures should be taken to elicit greater mass participation in the elections, Fattahi stated: All sections of society and the relevant officials—and especially the mass media, the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran—should present material to impress upon the people the crucial duties of the deputies, the status of the Majles, and its powers.

He added: With the explanation of such powers, the people will understand the powers they give to their representatives. In turn, the deputies approve laws for the government and all other institutions which will determine the destiny of the people and their lives. They will also ensure the correct implementation of the laws;

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this is the most important function, which should be explained to the people. As the late imam (may God be pleased with him) had said: "The Majles is at the forefront in all matters."

Asked his opinion of the amendment to the electoral law and the issue of the Council of Guardians's role in approving candidates, he said: During the debates on the electoral law, the deputies asked questions that ultimately resulted in this amendment, which was similar to an earlier interpretation of the Constitution by the Council of Guardians. This was clearly incorporated in the amendment, approved by the Islamic Majles, and became law. Thus any further discussion of the issue would not be very useful. On the other hand, in view of the known qualities of dedication, piety, and justice that the Guardians' Council members possess, it would be unlikely that any of them would reject the credentials of individuals or groups merely because of differences of opinion or taste and ban them from their natural right to run for deputy. The amendment says that individuals whose qualifications have been rejected can approach the Guardians' Council directly and ask for explanations.

In answer to a question on the performance of the Fourth Majles, he recalled its swift approval of credentials, the timely commencement of its deliberations at the outset of the fourth term, the approval of the annual budget and of the Second Five-Year Plan during double-shift sessions, the approval of the national insurance law—which in itself is very important and beneficial for the country— the confirmation of annual payments for essential goods in the course of the Five-Year Plan, and support for poor and needy people. Among other achievements of the Fourth Majles, Fattahi enumerated the allocation for agriculture, water, and infrastructural projects in the Five-Year Plan bill, the approval of the bill on support for women and children without guardians, the statutory Islamic punishments bill, and the consolidation of positions for medical students for the duration of the Five-Year Plan.

He continued: Among the weak points were deputies lack of the necessary dynamism with regard to international and national political matters due to the one-week recess in the Majles every month for visits to respective constituencies, which was proposed and implemented by this Majles. When the Majles takes a break, the opportunity to make the necessary timely moves regarding world political events is missed, and when the deputies return and the open session begins, the time for such moves has passed.

In brief, an overall perspective and consideration of public interests seem to have given way to a narrow approach and a more regional perspectives. This can be considered a weak point and should be avoided.

Asked his opinion regarding the belief that the existence of factions in the Majles is the cause of a needless tussle that impedes implementation of decisions, Fattahi stated: If the factions and groups are based on their own underlying beliefs and perceptions, it would be inappropriate and unwelcome. However, differences in tastes and perspectives regarding the current national issues, especially economic issues, while accepting the principles and beliefs of the Islamic Revolution and the leadership of the great leader, are not only welcome but are an essential prerequisite for a dynamic, independent, and powerful Majles. Without devout and revolutionary forces, the Majles would gradually lose that fervor, enthusiasm, and activity which are the hallmark of our great Islamic Revolution. It would then would lapse into a state of monotony and indifference. Ultimately it would become a Majles in name only.

Asked to predict the elections, Fattahi said: The experiences of four Majles terms since the Islamic Revolution prove that the choices of the various social strata were correct and principled. However, one should note that the direction and guidance of a society to choose the best is important. Those who consider themselves the guardians and custodians of the revolution should motivate the people to be participate in the elections and to choose the best, without any narrowmindedness or egocentricity.

He said: Any predictions regarding the composition of the Majles before even the names of candidates are announced would be unrealistic. However it can be said that the main principle is to bring acceptable and well-known faces to the election scene, either individually or collectively.

On the question whether what matters in the elections are the individual candidates, their platforms, or which faction they belong to, Fattahi said: In my opinion, society should first of all get to know the individuals and then consider their factions and parties. The thinking of the candidates and the correctness of their words and deeds, both past and present, should be the criteria; and then we should think about which body is nominating that individual. Since if we were to consider only the faction nominating the person, it is possible that individuals who are better and more acceptable with regard to their thinking, specialization, or experience but who do not belong to any formal body and who run independently will be ignored by the people.

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Liberal Opposition To Participate in Iran's Legislative Elections

NC2901133596 Paris AFP in English 1249 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan 29 (AFP)—The main liberal opposition in Iran has reversed an earlier decision and will field candidates in March legislative elections, the group's leader told AFP on Monday [29 January].

Ebrahim Yazdi of the Liberation Movement of Iran (LMI) said several members of the group which is banned but tolerated would run for the March 8 polls. The hopefuls will however register for the vote "under their own names, not the group," he said.

The LMI, which espouses liberal democratic views, announced its participation in the upcoming votes earlier this month, but later said it had withdrawn its candidates under government pressure.

Yazdi, a foreign minister in the interim government which emerged after the 1979 Islamic revolution, has been serving as LMI's general secretary since the death last year of Mehdi Bazargan, a former prime minister.

Another opposition group, the ultra-nationalist the Party of the People of Iran headed by Daryush Foruhar, has said it would boycott the election.

But the Islamic left-wing Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution, led by former industry minister Behzad Nabavi, has announced it would participate to "prevent the parliament from being dominated " by the ruling Islamic conservatives.

Islamic left-wingers were sidelined from power in the last legislative elections in 1992.

Iranian Cleric Discusses Elections, TMCA-TMCS Differences

NC2601153596 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 14 Jan 96 p 2

[Interview with Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Reza Taqavi, a Tehran Majles deputy and TMCA spokesman, by unidentified RESALAT parliamentary correspondent in Tehran; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [RESALAT] On the eve of the fifth Majles elections we are witnessing plans to form what is being referred to as an independent faction. Some people are interested in the issue. What do you think?

[Taqavi] First, we must define the term "independent" in a political discussion, especially amid the political atmosphere surrounding the fifth Majles elections and amid fervent controversy.

The two main political groups, that is, the Tehran Militant Clergy Association [TMCA] and the Tehran Militant Clerics Society [TMCS], contested the fourth Majles elections. The fourth Majles began its sessions with the TMCA and its supporters in the majority. [passage omitted]

The term "independent" implies those who are not members of the TMCA or TMCS.

I believe that in free political conditions, anyone can serve the people and conduct political activity within the legal framework. But political terms should be defined so that the people can act with full awareness and recognition of these terms and their meaning.

Having been involved in the news and reports and knowing about activities, I think that those who seek to form a political party independent of the clergy believe the people's interest in the clergy has waned and that they should exploit the situation to carve out a party with the charismatic description "independent" from those individuals who are at a loose end.

These individuals saw political opinion ripe for sowing such seeds, so they thought about forming an independent political party.

If these analyses are correct, you might say that they are deluded, since these individuals do not understand the people or the clergy. The clergy has deep roots in the people's beliefs and thoughts. It has acquired an image and credibility as a sacred institution with its selflessness and sincere services to the people. This cannot be destroyed through criticism and fault-finding. There is nothing similar in our country that could replace it. [passage omitted]

[RESALAT] What school of thought will gain a majority in the fifth Majles?

[Taqavi] The TMCA has credibility among the people and has qualities acquired through its struggle in the arena of jehad and martyrdom and in its following the imamate and the Velayat-e Faqih [rule by the supreme jurisconsult]. The TMCA's members are popular, trustworthy figures with a grand base and lofty position in the hearts and minds of the people: His Eminence Ayatollah Mahdavi-Kani and the prominent faces of the system, such as President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, who is considered one of the stalwarts of the TMCA. You might predict that the fifth Majles will be comprised of members of the TMCA and their supporters.

[RESALAT] Why is the TMCS not actively involved or present in these elections?

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[Taqavi] The TMCS should answer this. Some members announced that they would encourage people to vote but, for particular reasons, would not be present on the election scene as an organization. The real meaning of active participation by a group is that it should nominate a candidate. Otherwise participation is meaningless.

This TMCS view indicates that:

1. Currently they do not feel the need for official participation.

2. Differences among their central council have prevented them from reaching a decision.

3. They see their chances of gaining a majority as weak.

4. This is a way to express their objections to current officials and others who are involved in society.

[RESALAT] Could there be a coalition between the TMCA and the TMCS in these elections?

[Taqavi] The circumstances and mental and political climate suggest that in this round of elections, at least, no coalition will be forged. The TMCS broke away from the TMCA toward the end of the second Majles term for reasons of its own.

The reasons were detailed by Musavi Kho'iniha in an interview in KEYHAN in 1367 [year beginning 21 March 1988] in which he said TMCS stances and opinions were different from those of the TMCA.

His remarks suggest there is room to overhaul their respective views so that they can find common ground. One of them must relinquish its stances and opinions to forge a coalition. So far we have witnessed no such thing.

Freedom Movement Leader, Others To Run in Iranian Elections

LD2801103696 Tehran IRNA in English 0810 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 28, IRNA — In an interview with the Persian daily 'IRAN', Ebrahim Yazdi [secretary general of the Freedom Movement of Iran] said Saturday [27 January] that he and others holding same political views will run for parliamentrary seats in the March 8 elections for the 270-seat Majles.

Regarding the objective of their running for the next parliament, Yazdi said that based on the Constitution of the Islamic Republic, it is the right of every Iranian citizen to do so. He further called on all to exercise their rights in this regard.

"As far as we are concerned, we should register as candidates and run for the fifth Majles," Yazdi stressed. Asked whether the members of his group will register as candidates under the name of a specific organization, he noted that their nominees, whether from inside the group or not, will compete for parliamentary seats as independent candidates.

Concerning the recent developments on the scene of elections, Yazdi reiterated that he is against reactions from some groups trying to exclude others. "Political groups should not consider themselves the custodians of the country. Thus, they should refrain from creating unfavorable circumstances for other groups or for the emergence of a new political entity," Yazdi concluded.

Pakistan

Pakistan Condemns Alleged Indian Attack Across Line of Control

BK2701055596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Eighteen people were killed and another 20 seriously injured yesterday when the Indian troops from across the Line of Control fired two rockets at a juma [Friday] prayer congregation at forward Kahuta, a border town in Azad Kashmir. The injured were immediately rushed to the Combined Military Hospital in Rawalakot and MDS [expansion unknown] Hospital in Kahuta. Senior officials of the local administration immediately reached the scene of the incident. The mosque was also reportedly destroyed in the Indian attack.

Pakistan has strongly condemned the Indian troops' rocket attack. A Foreign Office spokesman said in Islamabad that the attack on civilians show how trigger happy the Indians are. He said violations of Line of Control has been going on increasingly for some time, and yesterday's attack is a major violation. He said it is to be condemned strongly as they must have known that Friday prayers were going on and they deliberately targeted a place where loss of life would be maximum.

Meanwhile, a spokesman of the Ministry of Defense said in Rawalpindi that the use of long-range rockets on civilian population is a deliberate and wanton attempt of provocation. He said Pakistan has all along exercised restraint and refrained from retaliation to such provocations. The spokesman said the act of targeting civilians in a mosque during prayers is unprecedented and particularly condemnable.

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Pakistani Minister Comments on Indian Troop Violation of Boundary

BK2701112596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Indian troops in occupied Kashmir got engaged in violation of the status of working boundary in Jammu area today, from where they were dissuaded by Pakistani troops. Instead of stopping violation, the Indian troops resorted to indiscriminate firing. Pakistan has been exercising restraint all along despite Indian provocations. However, in view of today's violations Pakistan was constrained to take necessary preventive measures.

A BBC report from the Indian-held Kashmir quotes UN observers as saying that they received from Pakistan about 6,000 complaints of violations of Line of Control in Kashmir by India during the past five years.

[Hong Kong AFP in English at 1059 GMT on 27 January adds: "Pakistani Defense Minister Aftab Shaban Mirani warned Saturday that Pakistan was able to deal with any aggressive threat from India. 'Pakistan's defense is impregnable,' the minister said, amid reports that Pakistani and Indian troops exchanged heavy fire along the Kashmir border a day after an alleged Indian rocket strike on a mosque on the Pakistani side. Mirani, quoted by the official Associated Press of Pakistan news agency, said Pakistan 'has the capability to answer back in case of any aggression,' adding that any such attempt by India would prove to be 'futile.'"

[AFP quotes the minister as saying that the mosque attack and the alleged deployment of the Prithvi missile are part of an electoral "ploy" by the Indian Government.]

Pakistan Reports Second Indian Rocket Attack

BK2701123596 Hong Kong AFP in English 1228 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Jan 27 (AFP) — Pakistan on Saturday [27 January] reported two people were killed in a rocket attack from India hours after an earlier attack on a mosque left 20 dead.

The second attack occurred about 30 kilometers (18 miles) south of the border town of Rawalakot shortly after two rockets hit the mosque in the town of Kahuta Friday, said Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan, state premier in Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

No other details were immediately available about the second attack.

Two more people died of their wounds from the Mosque attack Saturday bringing the toll from that incident to 20.

India has denied involvement in the mosque attack.

Pakistani Senate Passes Resolution Condemning Indian Rocket Attack

BK2701133996 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1300 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a unanimous resolution, the Senate today strongly condemned the rocket attack on forward Kahuta in Azad Kashmir in which 19 people were killed and several others injured. The resolution was moved by opposition leader Raja Zafarul Haq and seconded by Raza Rabbani, the minister of state for law and justice. The resolution says these attacks are one more example of an aggressive and criminal attitude and are a severe threat to regional peace. The resolution says the attack should open the eyes of the international community, before whom the Indian leaders are trying to project India as the largest democracy. The resolution also calls upon the international community to exert pressure on India to resolve the Kashmir issue in accordance with UN resolutions.

Pakistani Leaders Condemn Indian Rocket Attacks

BK2701135296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1300 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Sikander Hayat Khan and Prime Minister Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan of Azad Kashmir have condemned the rocket attacks on the civilian population by Indian troops from across the Line of Control. After funeral prayers for the martyrs at forward Kahuta, they made it clear that these kind of despicable tactics cannot thwart the struggle of the Kashmiris to realize their right of self-determination.

Pakistani Minister Sees 'Election Ploy' Behind Incidents With India

BK2701132696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1300 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Minister Aftab Shaban Mirani has said India's attack on Azad Kashmir and the installation of Prithvi missiles on its borders is part of an election ploy. Speaking to reporters in Multan, he said we should not think along the lines that all the recent incidents are developing toward a Pakistan-India war. He said, however, that Pakistan is capable of giving a reply in case of any foreign aggression. He said Pakistan has been trying to convince international organizations to exert pressure on India to roll back its nuclear program. He also said that Pakistan will sign the

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Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty at the same time India signs it.

Pakistani Foreign Office Rejects Indian Denial of Rocket Attack

BK2701143896 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has rejected Indian denial of carrying out a rocket attack on forward Kahuta near the Line of Control, killing and wounding several people. A Foreign Office spokesman said in Islamabad today that destruction of the mosque and loss of human lives are ample proof that rockets did come from across the border. Commenting the Indian Defense Ministry denial quoted by AFP, the spokesman said it is not the first time that there had been violations of the Line of Control by the Indian troops.

Pakistan: Continued Indian Firing Reportedly Injures Civilians

BK2701143496 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Indian Army continued violation of the control line today. In Jammu Sector, two civilians were injured in indiscriminate firing and shelling by the Indian Army.

Yesterday, Indian gunners fired rockets from Thana Pirkot to forward Kahuta in Bagh District. Two rockets landed in Jamia Mosque of forward Kahuta at the time the faithful were offering Friday prayers. PTV correspondent Azhar Masood visited forward Kahuta today, where the burial of those 19 people was taking place who became target of the Indian barbaric attack. All those who embraced martyrdom were innocent civilians. The dead include four children of seven to 10 years of age. Our correspondent found despair and gloom in forward Kahuta, where the majority of the population was mourning the deaths of the 19 people. Indian rockets partially damaged Jamia Mosque and the adjoining marketplace. In yesterday's firing, 20 people were injured, some seriously.

The inhabitants of the area told our correspondent that in September last, Indian forces deliberately attacked civilian targets, and yesterday without any provocation rockets were fired on Jamia Mosque, which can never be considered a military target. The local population was of the view that since Indian Army has failed to suppress the popular uprising inside held Kashmir, it has in desperation started hitting civilian targets in Azad Kashmir.

UN Officials, Journalists Visit Rocket Attack Site in Pakistan

BK2701160596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Pakistan has rejected India's denial that it carried out a rocket attack on forward Kahuta in Azad Kashmir near the Line of Control, killing and wounding several people. A Foreign Office spokesman said in Islamabad today that the martyrdom of the mosque and the loss of human life are ample proof that the rockets came from across the border. Commenting on the Indian Defense Ministry's denial, quoted by AFP, the spokesman said it is not the first time that Indian troops have violated the Line of Control.

Two officials of the UN Military Observers Group for India and Pakistan as well as a group of journalists visited forward Kahuta to study the effect of the brutal rocket attacks in the area. Eyewitnesses told them that one rocket burst in the courtyard as the people were coming out of the mosque after Friday prayers. The mosque was crowded with people. The first rocket landed around 1430 [0930 GMT], when people were standing on an adjacent road after offering prayers. The second rocket was fired about three minutes later and landed on a girls college.

Pakistani Commentary Condemns Alleged Indian Rocket Attack on Mosque

BK2701173696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 27 Jan 96

[Commentary by A.B.S. Jafri]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Two Indian rockets targeted a village in Azad Kashmir yesterday, leaving 19 dead on the spot and many more seriously wounded. The Government of Pakistan has been quick to condemn the ghastly incident. Observers have described the incident as perhaps the worst of its kind in many years. Defense Ministry spokesman in Pakistan drew the attention of the world to the trigger-happy attitude of the Indian military authorities who control Indian-occupied parts of the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Friday's attack has some highly significant aspects to it and these need to be studied and understood. In the first place, the day of the attack has a very special import as well as the timing. Friday afternoon is the special congregation time in mosques all over the Muslim world where Muslims live. The Indian authorities could not be unaware of the fact that the targeted mosque in the village close to the Line of Control in the disputed state would be overflowing with worshipers. The day and

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timing of the attack speaks of the premeditated nature of the attack intended to cause maximum deaths.

The day of the attack was also India's Republic Day, marking the 46th anniversary of India attaining the status of a republic. Inside India itself, Friday 26 January was marred by explosions and political protests in a number of cities. In Srinagar, capital of the disputed state and under Indian military control, Friday was observed as the black day, signifying the protests of the people in parts of Jammu and Kashmir. The city was under siege. Evidently the Indian authorities were under great embarrassment.

The attack was clearly motivated by an urge to take revenge and under the Indian practice to teach a lesson to the Kashmiri freedom fighters. Reports from many other centers in Europe and the United States speak of protest demonstrations to mark the Indian Republic Day. These protests were mounted by several Indian groups demanding autonomy. Notable among those are the Sikhs in the West Indian state of Haryana and several tribes in India's extreme east. It will be seen that the people of the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir are not the only people who believe they have scores to settle with India.

The Republic Day celebrations in the Indian capital, New Delhi, were remarkably inhibited by an irritating excess of security precautions, keeping the people away from the spectacle at which India put on display its military might as symbolized by its battle tank named Arjun and the latest addition to India's missile arsenal named Prithvi, meaning the whole earth. The Prithvi missile was also test fired ostensibly to provide excitement to the Indian masses. The rocket attack would seem to be in suitably aggressive mood for the occasion, which was marred by the trappings of imperial and also intimidatory process.

The recent past has witnessed a special enhancement in India's efforts to emphasize its military authority. The government in New Delhi has arrogantly rejected world pressure to move in the direction of nuclear disarmament. Indian spokesman in New Delhi and at other international fora have rejected the idea of putting a stop to testing nuclear devices and weapons. Mr. Narasimha Rao, India's prime minister, has personally declared that India would not forsake what he has chosen to describe as its nuclear options.

The official tone in reference to Pakistan has been notably pungent. There has been persistent and loud talk of the mighty Arjun tank, but the Prithvi missile are more significant for the nuclear option. Such an orchestrated campaign to play up India's part in military muscle — focussing on the fearsome and sophisticated conventional weapons and nuclear armament — cannot be without a major political purpose to be achieved at home and abroad. Mr. Narasimha Rao has also been showing political innovation if not aggression at the domestic level. Pressure has been applied to the opposition right-wing Hindu fundamentalists. Corruption charges are under investigation against politicians who were seen to be possible contenders for power.

India is only a few months away from general elections. Prime Minister Mr. Narasimha Rao is clearly playing election politics. It appears that he is trying to outdo the anti-Pakistan hardliners in preparations for the general elections. Hence all this tough talking and application of military force to impressure the Pakistan lobbies, which have been on the ascendant in recent years. But not all this would provide an iota of justification for the virtual massacre of worshipers inside a mosque in Azad Kashmir. That it was a premeditated attack is manifestly clear from the attending circumstances.

Pakistani Officials Condemn Indian Rocket Attack; Protests Held

BK2801075296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Leaders across the country continue to condemn Indian rocket assault across the Line of Control and testing of long-range Prithvi missile. The Azad Kashmir president, Sardar Sikander Hayat Khan, and Prime Minister Sardar Mohammad Abdul Qayyum Khan have called upon the United Nations to take note of the Indian rocket attack on Azad Kashmir. He said the people of Jammu and Kashmir are accustomed to render sacrifices for national objectives, who would not be intimidated by such dastardly acts.

The chairman of Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, said in Islamabad that there could be no compromise on national security. He said that India is working on a well- conceived plan to suppress the struggle for the right of self- determination in occupied Kashmir. He said the recent attack on forward Kahuta, threat of second Indian nuclear test, and development of Prithvi missile should not be taken in isolation.

The opposition leader, Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, has termed the rocket attack on a mosque in Azad Kashmir by Indian forces as a blatant aggression and a challenge for the UN and OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference]. In a statement in Islamabad, he said in addition to condemnation, the world community should press Indian to compensate the affected families of forward Kahuta. He called upon the government

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to immediately take diplomatic and practical steps to convince India that such incidents do not occur in future.

The amir [chief] of Jamaat-i-Islami, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, called for UN sanctions against India due to its human rights violations. He termed the Indian attack on civilian population as a coward act.

A complete strike was observed in the Azad Kashmir town of Bagh yesterday against Indian rocket attack on forward Kahuta, killing 20 people and injuring many others. Speakers at the rally strongly condemned the Indian aggression. They said that such attacks could not deter the people of Azad Kashmir from supporting their brothers in occupied Kashmir.

A protest demonstration was also held in Islamabad at the Indian High Commission. The protesters handed over a letter addressed to the Indian prime minister. The letter described the missile attack on the civilian population as a naked and brutal act of aggression. It urged India to stop violation of gross human rights [as heard] in the held valley.

Kashmiris held a protest demonstration in front of Indian High Commission in London. The demonstrators also delivered an open letter at the Downing Street, reminding British Prime Minister John Major of his country's moral and international obligation to bring about a solution of Kashmir issue. Sikh community in Britain also held demonstration in front of the Indian High Commission against killing of Sikhs in Indian Punjab.

Pakistani Envoy Discusses Indian Rocket Attacks With Butrus-Ghali

BK2801074696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0500 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] At the United Nations, Pakistan's permanent representative has discussed with the secretary general, Mr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali, the recent Indian rocket attacks from across the Line of Control in Azad Kashmir. The attacks resulted in several casualties. Pakistan's permanent representative, Mr. Ahmad Kamal, also apprised the secretary general about the increased tension in the area and its likely consequences. Mr. Butrus Butrus- Ghali assured the Pakistan ambassador that he would keep a close watch over the situation.

The Pakistan representative also held consultations with the United Nations under secretary general responsible for peacekeeping, Mr. (Ismet Ketani).

Pakistani President Affirms 'No Danger of War' With India

BK2801081196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The president, Mr. Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari, has said that the Indian rocket attacks from across the Line of Control, killing 20 people in Azad Kashmir, is a dangerous escalation and show clear frustration of the Indian Government. Answering questions by newsmen in Islamabad today, Mr. Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari said Pakistan will take appropriate measures in response to the Indian rocket attacks. He cautioned India to be careful in such provocative acts.

In reply to a question, the president said there is no danger of war between Pakistan and India at the moment.

More on Pakistani President's Remarks on Indian Attack, Missile Test

BK2801144096 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has condemned the intensified violations of the Line of Control by the Indian Army. Informally talking to journalists at Pakistan Agricultural Research Council in Islamabad today, he said by pounding the civilian population with rockets, the Indian authorities are committing crimes against humanity. He said in Friday's incident, Indian rockets killed 20 innocent civilians in forward Kahuta. He said we have shown restraint by not retaliating, but we cannot remain silent spectators.

President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari said despite the fact that there was an international protest over the Indian missile program, New Delhi test fired its long-range missile. He said on the other hand, Pakistan was still adhering to the principles of Missile Technology Control Regime.

In response to a question whether a war between India and Pakistan has become inevitable, the president said no, we don't think the two countries are facing a threat of war.

Pakistan: Kashmiri Leaders Denounce Indian Rocket Attack on Mosque

BK2801160196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mirwaiz Omar Farooq, chairman of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, has strongly

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denounced India for its rocket attack on the Friday congregation in a mosque in forward Kahuta in Azad Kashmir, in which 20 people were killed and many others seriously injured. Sharply reacting to the rocket attack from across the Line of Control, Mirwaiz Omar Farooq expressed profound grief over this tragedy. He urged the United Nations to pressure India to stop extending its state terrorism to Azad Kashmir. The chairman of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference said such action by India must awake the world community to the urgency of resolving the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir and giving the right of self-determination to the Kashmiri people.

Syed Nazir Gilani, secretary general of the Jammu and Kashmir Council for Human Rights, has also condemned the rocket attack by India and urged the United Nations to stop such violations.

Pakistani Army Claims Indian Post Destroyed in Retaliation for Attack

BK2801092996 Islamabad THE NATION in English 28 Jan 96 pp 1, 13

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Pakistan Army, in retaliation to Indian rocket attack on a Kahuta mosque, destroyed an Indian army post in Jammu sector on Saturday [27 January].

Army sources said on Saturday morning the Indians violating the "working boundary" opened unprovoked fire on Pak Army. The Pak Army using heavy weapons destroyed a post in retaliation. After that the Indian guns fell silent. The sources have further said that after exchange of fire at the Line of Control (LoC) tension has escalated.

Meanwhile Corps Commander Corps-10 toured the Kahuta Forward and adjoining areas and discussed the situation with the commanding officers. An army source told The Nation that India used long-range rockets in attack on Kahuta Forward mosque.

The military experts have recovered rocket pieces from the hit- site.

A Foreign Office spokesman while talking to The Nation said that India should be ashamed of its claim that it has not fired the rocket. He said India fired the rocket at the mosque when nimazis [worshipers] were offering Juma [Friday] prayers there.

Pakistan has informed the UN military observers of the repercussions of the attack on the mosque. [passage omitted]

Kashmir Strike Called To Protest Rocket Attack

BK2901050396 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A general strike will be observed in occupied Kashmir tomorrow to protest against rocket attack by Indian troops on a mosque at forward Kahuta in Azad Kashmir. The strike call has been given by the All Parties Hurriyat Conference and other Kashmiri organizations.

Kashmiris, struggling for their right of self-determination, have expressed their strong indignation and grief over the brutal attacks by Indian troops and have decided to shut down entire activities including business across the whole valley to protest against rocket attack.

Indian troops have killed another 14 people in their continued repressive operations. According to reports, they killed at least three Kashmiris in a village of Anantnag District, two in Baramula, and one in Jammu region. Eight other people were shot dead during military crack down at various places of the held valley.

A spokesman of the Iranian Foreign Ministry has condemned the rocket attack on the mosque at forward Kahuta in Azad Kashmir.

Pakistani Paper: 'Strategic Value' of Area Hit by Indian Rocket Stressed

BK2801090996 Islamabad THE NATION in English 28 Jan 96 p 1

[Report by Fahd Husain]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Forward Kahuta, the small town in Azad Kashmsir hit by Indian rockets on Friday, has an extremely important strategic value and an equally significant history in relation to Pakistan-India conflict. It was no accident that it was chosen as a target by India.

Forward Kahuta is a small town 8 to 10 km from the Line of Control (LoC) and is a sub-division headquarters of Bagh district. Before partition, it was a part of the Punch district Haveli tehsil [revenue district]. Presently Punch town is in Occupied Kashmir though the major part of the district lies in Azad Kashmir. Forward Kahuta is about 15 to 20 km from Punch town. It is situated at the foot of Haji Pir Mountain.

Both Forward Kahuta and Haji Pir are located in what is known as the Bulge of Bidori. This is so because they form an area which juts into Occupied Kashmir. The LoC runs in almost a straight line from North to South but this area forms a bulge inside Occupied

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Kashmir, thereby disturbing the straight line of the LoC. For this geographical reason, the Indians have on many occasions expressed a strong desire to "straighten" the Bulge of Bidouri.

The reason: the Bulge of Bidouri cuts off the road link between Punch town and Srinagar. Since the Bulge falls inside Azad Kashmir territory, the road from Punch town to Srinagar has to curve around the Bulge. If the Indians control the Bulge, this road would head straight.

In both the wars (1965 and 1971) India had attacked the Bulge of Bidouri and occupied it. Forward Kahuta and Haji Pir had thus fallen in their hands. In fact, in the 1965 war, Indira Gandhi, then the minister for Information in the Shastri cabinet, had visited the forward areas including Haji Pir.

Forward Kahuta thus easily falls in the range of fire of the Indians. In the same way, Punch town is within Pakistan's firing range. But while India continuously targets Kahuta, Pakistan cannot do the same to Punch because it is inhabited by fellow Muslims.

Although Indian firing on Forward Kahuta is not uncommon, Friday's attack was the first with rockets resulting in 19 deaths. It is no coincidence that the same day (Friday) India had out its lethal missile Prithvi on display at the Republic Day parade. It conducted a test of Prithvi on Saturday as a show of muscle. The ghastly attack also coincided with the observance of Black Day in Occupied Kashmir.

Pakistan: Foreign Minister 'Once Again' Warns Against Indian Test

BK2701081096 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali has said that Pakistan will continue its moral and diplomatic support for the Kashmiris in their struggle to realize the right of self- determination. Addressing a gathering at Mandi Usmanwallah near Kasur yesterday, he condemned the brutal atrocities committed by India and said such activities have crossed all limits.

Warning India once again against another nuclear blast, the foreign minister said Pakistan is fully capable of defending its borders effectively.

Pakistani Foreign Secretary Reacts to Indian Missile Test

BK2701180296 Islamabad PTV Television Network in Urdu 1600 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] India has test fired its new long-range surface-to-surface Prithvi ballistic missile. According to the Indian news agency UNITED NEWS OF INDIA, the first test firing of this new kind of long-range missile was conducted at the missile testing range in the eastern state of Orissa. India has been test firing Prithvi missiles, which have a striking range of up to 150 km, for the last two years. India can hit several Pakistani cities with these Prithvi missiles. India has developed these missiles for deployment in the western states of Rajasthan and Punjab, bordering Pakistan. The news agency did not say what the striking range of this new missile is, but it was described as a long-range missile. [passage omitted]

Dear viewers, Foreign Secretary Najmuddin Sheikh has described the test firing of the Prithvi missile as very dangerous in the context of South Asian security:

[Begin Sheikh recording, in English] This to us represents a very dangerous development. It introduces a qualitatively new situation securitywise in South Asia, and will constrain Pakistan to take whatever measures are necessary for its own security. The Prithvi missile is Pakistan-specific missile; namely, it has the range that covers every city in Pakistan but does not have a long enough range to be used against anybody else. We have urged India in the past and we continue to urge India to sit with us and to work out ways by which the introduction of such dangerous new weapons of mass destruction in South Asia can be avoided. [end recording]

Pakistani Senators Discuss Indian Missile Test, Brown Amendment

BK2801114996 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The minister of state for law and parliamentary affairs, Mian Raza Rabbani, has informed the Senate that production and deployment of Prithvi missile by India had forced Pakistan to consider countermeasures to safeguard its own security. He said test firing of this missile marks a step toward escalation of tension in South Asia.

Earlier, rising on a point of order, Mr. Manzoor Khan Gichki expressed deep concern over this development, which is a threat to the peace and stability of the region. The leader of the opposition in the house, Raja Mohammad Zafarul Haq, pointed out that India defied international public opinion. Pakistan had every right to take necessary steps to strengthen its security, he said.

Responding to an adjournment motion sought to be moved by Syed Fazal Agha and Hafiz Hussain Ahmed, Mr. Rabbani informed the house that there has been no change in the United States' position on Kashmir, which seeks a solution in accordance with the wishes of the

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Kashmiri people. He said the United States considers Jammu and Kashmir a disputed territory and a root cause of tension in South Asia. During a Congressional hearing on 6th of last month, Ms. Robin Raphel had pointed out that solution of Kashmir calls for a dialogue between Pakistan and India.

Earlier, rising on a point, Miss Fiza Junejo, described final approval of the Brown Amendment in the United States as vindication of Pakistan's stand on nuclear nonproliferation.

Responding to a point of order raised by Mrs. Nasreen Jalil, the interior minister, Mr. Nasirullah Khan Babar, urged the Altaf Group to shun terrorism and come to the negotiating table for a solution of the Karachi problem. He said if a small group known as Altaf Group surrenders the arms, he is willing to fight for their rights. The interior minister vehemently denied charges of custodial killings and said the law enforcing agencies were not at all involved in such acts. The interior minister also denied that excesses were being committed against Bugtis [tribal leaders] in Balochistan. He was responding to an adjournment motion by Mr. Bashir Ahmed Tareen on the matter. After the assurance, the mover did not press the motion.

Pakistani Opposition Leader 'Strongly' Condemns Indian Missile Test

BK2801150596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The president of Pakistan Muslim League- Nawaz Group and leader of the opposition, Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, has strongly condemned the test fire of the Prithvi missile by India and termed it a grave threat to the peace of the region. In a statement in Lahore today, he warned India that Pakistan could never be intimidated with huge arsenals of latest weapons and piles of long- range missiles. He said India must keep it in mind that the people of Pakistan are united like a solid rock to defeat the aggressive designs of New Delhi. He said our internal differences will never be impediment to our national unity. Nawaz Sharif urged the United Nations, the OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference], the European Community, and other nations to put restraints on India with economic sanctions. He said intense political, diplomatic, and moral pressure was needed to make India desist from destroying regional peace and terrorizing its neighbors.

Pakistani Editorial Views Indian Premier's Remarks on Nuclear Option

BK2801141296 Islamabad THE PAKISTAN TIMES in English 28 Jan 96 p 6

[Editorial: "A Threatening Posture"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] According to press reports Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao has said that India will not abandon its nuclear option. Addressing a convention of ruling Congress (I) party workers in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh he said, "we will not be pressurised by anyone over our nuclear and missile programmes and we will keep all options open in this regard." The Indian Prime Minister further said that his government's efforts for making the country self reliant in the field of a defence are moving ahead speedily and the right to acquire nuclear weapons would not be abandoned. On the other hand, India again insisted on a global disarmament timetable at the UN disarmament conference at Geneva indicating thereby that it would otherwise not sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

India has already tested a nuclear weapon in 1974 at the Pokaran test site. But it mouthed a pious formula about the bomb being a "peaceful" nuclear explosion. The world then went along with the hypocrisy except Pakistan which immediately started its own peaceful nuclear programme.

However, it has not developed nuclear weapons to counterbalance India's and has never tested one. In fact, no new nuclear power has publicly tested such a weapon since 1974. The five nuclear powers signed a nonproliferation treat (NPT) to stop the spread of nuclear weapons. They pretended that India hasn't tested a nuclear weapon and won't do so in future. This myth of NPT has worked for over 20 years. But recently, American satellites began picking up new activity at India's Pokaran test site. After diplomatic feelers failed to elicit any explanation, Washington went public a few weeks ago saying that India was preparing another nuclear test and warned New Delhi of tough sanctions if it did so. India flatly denied that it was planning a test and Indian newspapers were filled with the usual bluster about foreign plots. But it is hard to believe that Washington has so little to do that it invented the whole story just to annoy India. Now the latest outburst of India's Prime Minister has let the cat out of the bag. His Congress Party faces the greatest threat from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) whose stock- in-trade is xenophobic nationalism and Hindu chauvinism. So Mr Narasimha Rao's first line of defence has been simple stage another nuclear test to appease anti-Pakistan elements.

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The total test ban being negotiated in Geneva is the most important arms limitation measure of the decade, maybe of the century. All five nuclear powers are ready for it at the same time India is not only backing out of it but is openly adopting a threatening posture.

Pakistan has expressed its concern over it. It is hoped the international community will do its utmost to deter India from conducting another nuclear test.

Sri Lanka

LTTE 'Prepared To Consider' Devolution Proposals

BK2701120496 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] is prepared to consider the legal draft of government's devolution proposals if it is sent directly or through a third party, the LTTE's deputy leader of the political wing, Karikalan, said. In a news conference held in the Batticaloa District, Karikalan said they were unable to comment upon the devolution proposals as they had not been provided with an official copy. They are not prepared to comment on what appeared in the press. Besides, they don't know what shape the proposals take in the Parliamentary Select Committee.

The fall of Jaffna is only a temporary setback, he said, and LTTE would revert to guerrilla warfare to destabilize the armed forces.

LTTE Report Claims Downing of Air Force Helicopter

BK2801151896 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A military transport helicopter belonging to the Sri Lankan Air Force was shot down by an antiaircraft contingent of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] this afternoon. Thirty-nine people on board were killed. When the helicopter, flying from Palali military base, approached Vettilaikerni, it was attacked by the LTTE antiaircraft contingent positioned there. It was a recently procured Russian-built Mi-17 military transport helicopter that was targeted. The Sri Lankan side has reported that 30 soldiers from the Army's engineering unit, three Army officers, two Naval officers, and two Air Force officers on board the helicopter were killed. The [words indistinct] said that two more people were also killed. This has created various kinds of speculation among the people.

In his briefing to REUTER, Tamil Selvan, head of the LTTE's political wing, said: It is not possible to discuss a political solution while the war continues. Saying that the Sri Lankan Government has not accepted the LTTE's proposals and views for a solution to the ethnic conflict, Tamil Selvan also said that peace cannot be established in Sri Lanka without the participation of the LTTE in the peace process. In response to a query, he said the LTTE does not have any plan to recruit children into its force and that it is not difficult for the Tigers to consolidate their freedom fighters. [passage omitted]

Five civilians were killed and 20 injured in a beastly aerial attack by a Sri Lankan Air Force Pucara aircraft on Iranaimadanagar [name as transliterated] in Mulankavil locality, Mannar District. It should be noted that the people killed in the attack were those who, out of fear of the Sri Lankan Government's state-sponsored terrorism, had fled to Iranaimadanagar from various places and taken asylum there. The civilians who were the victims of state terrorism are: Chelvarasa Jayarani, 20, Chelvarasa Kausala, 10, and Thangavelu Thausha, 12, from Iranaitivu; and Jesudasan Plus Silva, 28, and Jesudasan Polin, 10, from Gurunagar [name as transliterated].

Freedom fighter Valiant Tiger Ranchithan, alias Kandasamy Sathyanathan from Batticaloa, who was injured in the ongoing military operation in the district, has embraced martyrdom. We pay tribute to that national hero who sacrificed himself in the war to liberate our motherland.

The thirst of the Tigers is for the motherland of Tamil Eelam. Thanks.

Colombo Radio Reports 'Heavy' LTTE Casualties in Fighting

BK2901114396 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Heavy LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] casualties were reported from the east during the last 24 hours ending early this morning. According to the Operational Headquarters of the Defense Ministry, terrorists in large numbers attacked the security forces detachment in the early hours of today at the 10th milepost along the Palaviya-Pulmoddai road in the Trincomalee District. Reinforcements sent from nearby detachment were also confronted by the terrorists. The security forces retaliated effectively, repulsing the attack. They caused heavy casualties among the terrorists. One officer and 12 soldiers were killed; three soldiers were wounded. The casualties have been evacuated to the Anuradhapura General Hospital.

The Operational Headquarters reported another incident at Janakapura in Weli Oya yesterday. A security forces

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fighting patrol was ambushed by many terrorists. The troops, with the help of reinforcements, retaliated effectively, causing heavy casualties to the terrorists. The troops recovered three automatic weapons and a radio set from the site of the incident. Three soldiers were killed in action. One soldier was wounded and evacuated to the Anuradhapura Hospital.

Sri Lankan Army Official Says Women Soldiers To Fight LTTE

BK2801114596 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] For the first time in Sri Lanka, women soldiers will go in to combat against the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam]. A senior Army official told LANKAPUVATH that a battalion of combat-trained women would move to Jaffna within the next few days. They will serve in the forward defense locality of the security forces camp at Elephant Pass. The women's battalion, comprising 700 volunteers, have been equipped to take on the Tigers in battle and will be more than a match for women terrorists. The volunteers can wield machine guns, automatic rifles, and the official has described them as tough and very adept at military tactics. Until now women soldiers in Sri Lanka were restricted to office and other noncombat duties.

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